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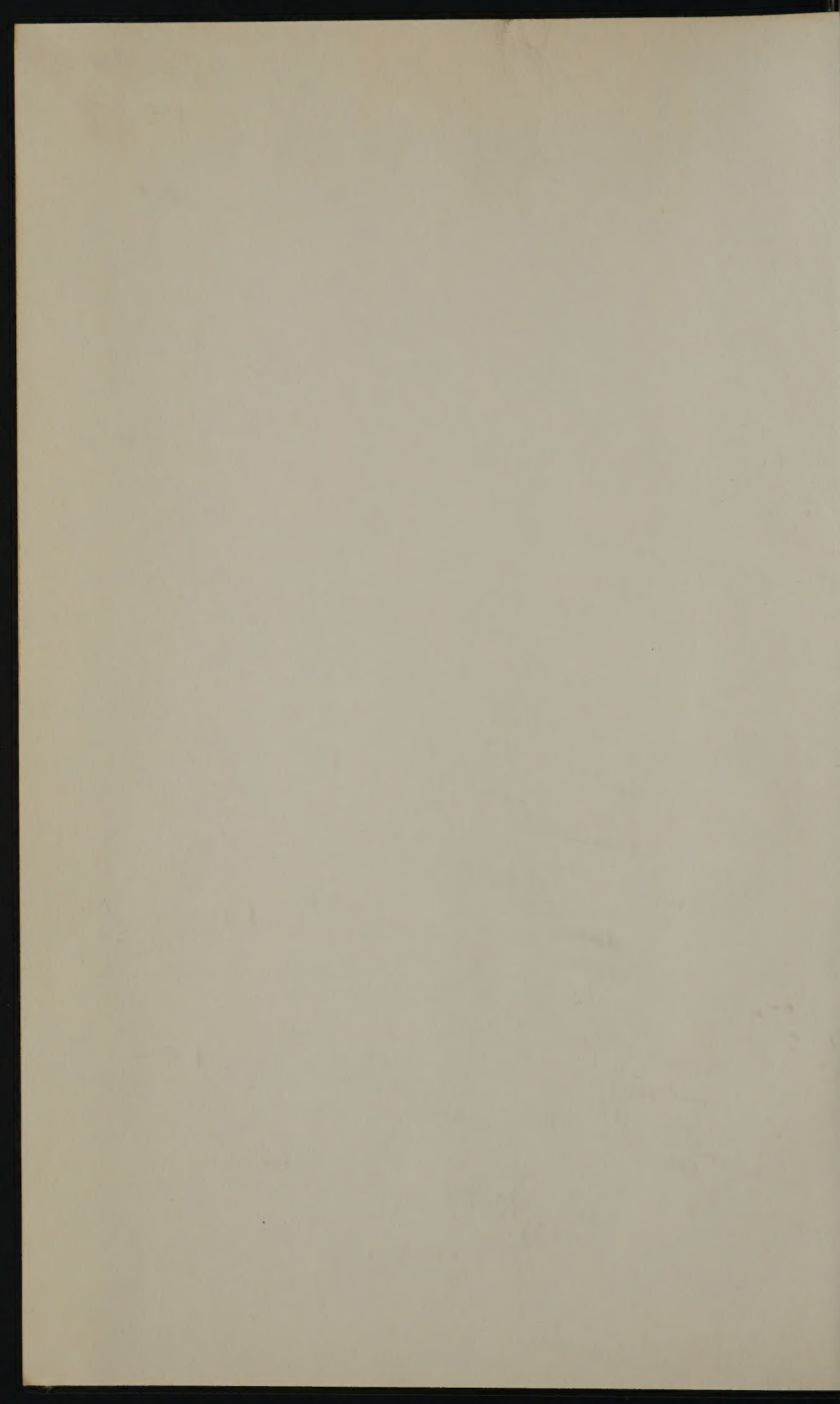
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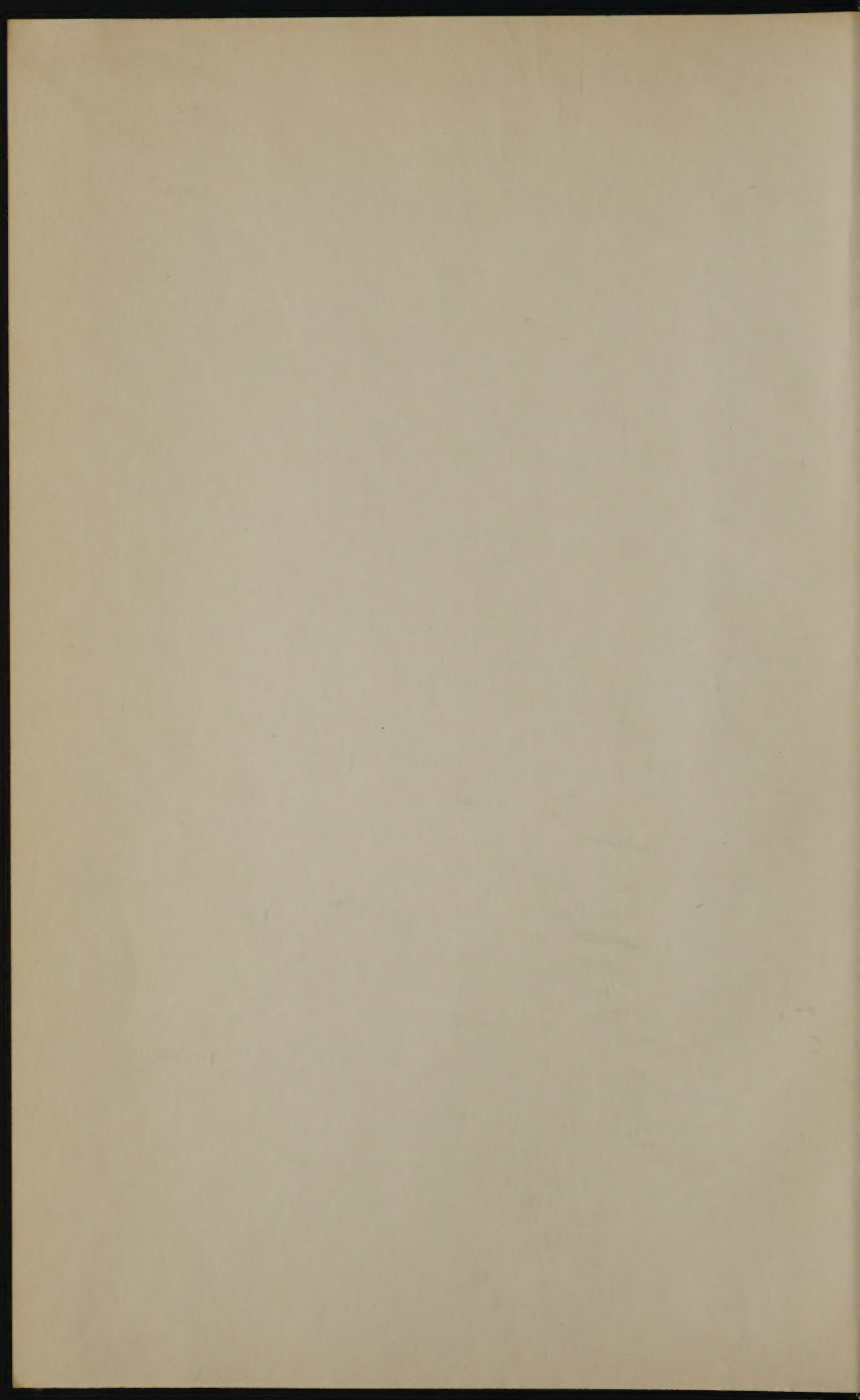


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HISTORICAL SKETCH <sup>c</sup>  
OF THE  
INCORPORATED VILLAGE  
OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH, N. Y.  
1640 - 1951

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BY  
BEATRICE G. ROGERS

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## *An Appreciation*

We Americans have always had a special place in our hearts for the pioneer and the pathfinder; and that is as it should be. The distinction of blazing the trail and making the way easier for others betokens qualities of initiative, perseverance and industry, which were so characteristic of the Founders, and have made it possible for us today to enjoy the fruits of their labors.

Beatrice G. Rogers, the first historian of what is now the Incorporated Village of Westhampton Beach, deserves all the honor and affection which we of the vicinage can bestow upon her; for she has produced a little masterpiece. The mere assembling of such a mass of interesting material must have been in itself a monumental task of patient inquiry; but this little book is much more than a record of the past. It betrays the hand of the true artist. It has objectivity and restraint which are not too often found in the works of local historians; and yet, now and then, we come across some little hint of the struggle to suppress her true feelings toward these few square miles of earthly paradise, upon which Mother Nature has dispensed her bounties with such a generous hand. The style and little mannerisms of expression, too, seem part and parcel of the place itself.

As an outlander from Westhampton I can only hope that some other devoted soul may undertake the writing of its history. I well remember Culver's Beach, where the gumdrops were of such superlative quality, and Captain Jerry and his sloop, to say nothing of the Laura of much earlier times, which also sailed us over to Culver's from the Apaucuck Point House. In the old days when the bay was fresh, boys perched on the bows of the catboats used sticks to push away the seaweed during the races, which seemed like the strife between the Giants and the Gods. What adulation was bestowed upon the skipper of the winning boat! Further back in the mists of early boyhood Beaver Dam creek seems like a fairyland; and the morsels of sliced beef at the General Store, not too far distant from the Mill, make my mouth water still. There was a well near one of the houses on the East side of the creek, where one could slake his thirst. What fun it was dropping the bucket down and seeing the handle whirl around! And the ice on the bay; and the scooters. Imagine teams of horses crossing over to the dunes!

A great author once said that all the happenings of each day, down to the last detail, fall on our minds as softly as light, but the impressions remain as long as we live. The trick is to summon them before us, especially the happy ones. Mrs. Rogers' history will do that for us; reading this book will stir many a memory, as it has stirred mine.

Harold R. Medina

United States Courthouse  
New York City  
October 15, 1953

OFFICIAL HISTORY  
of  
INCORPORATED VILLAGE OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH  
NEW YORK

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By resolution, the Village Board declared, on September 8, 1953  
that the "Historical Sketch of the Incorporated Village of Westhampton Beach"  
by Beatrice Rogers, is the official history of the Village.

*Copyrighted by*  
BEATRICE G. ROGERS  
October, 1953



## FOREWORD

This first attempt to compile a history of the Incorporated Village of Westhampton Beach is presented with a full sense of its limitations, probable serious omissions and, of course, some errors common in all histories.

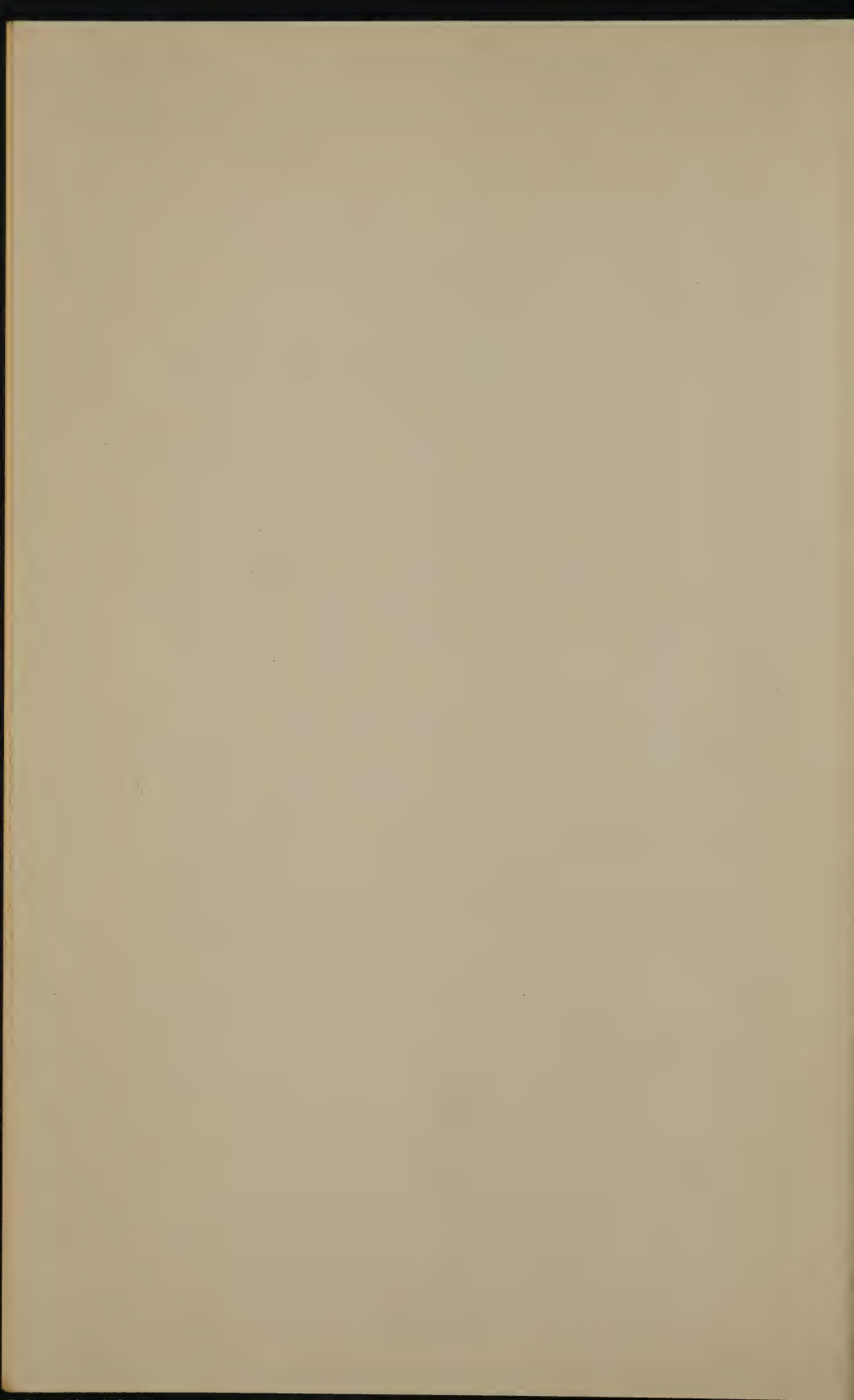
Westhampton Beach has been given small attention in the histories of eastern Long Island; perhaps this is because there is nothing especially spectacular or unusual in the background to make it outstanding historically. With limited sources for research, much of the material assembled has been gleaned by questioning local residents who remember people and events in bygone years. The growing interest in local history has been an inspiration to collect and record as much material as possible relating to early times before those days have receded so far into the past that their memory will be lost forever.

To a host of friends who have given encouragement in my endeavor, I owe a debt of gratitude and fully realize that without their help nothing could have been accomplished. I am especially grateful to Miss Augusta Meeker, the late Ernest H. Bishop, George E. Winters and Miss Sophia Parsons, who have contributed valuable information and were always tolerant and patient with my everlasting questioning.

I have included some obvious and current facts in order to bring the progress of the Village up to date in these changing times, keeping in mind the fact that events of yesterday are history to-day.

Bea Rogers  
Village Historian

Westhampton Beach, N. Y.  
December 28, 1952





# I

## THE PIONEER SETTLEMENT

The small group of Englishmen who arrived on the shores of North Sea (Southampton, N. Y.) 'way back in 1640 little realized that their venture would have such a profound influence upon the history of eastern Long Island in the years to come. The founding of Westhampton Beach can best be understood by taking into account the long series of events involved in the settling and the development of the Southampton colony. The origin, character and struggles of the early settlers, together with their land grants, patents and Indian deeds have been adequately described in a number of fine historical works\*; therefore, only a brief outline will be included in this history of the Village.

The little band of pioneers who first came to the eastern tip of the Island numbered only forty persons and after their arrival from England had lived for a short period in the Massachusetts colony. At the time these people left their homeland they were permitted little or no civic and religious freedom; consequently, they determined to cross the ocean and establish a community in accordance with their desire to live as free men.

The men who signed the agreement for the venture pooled their resources to purchase a vessel and calling themselves "undertakers" sailed forth from Lynn, Massachusetts in 1640 to seek a new home. Some previous explorations had not been suffi-

\* "Early History of Southampton" by George R. Howell  
"History of Southampton Town", James T. Adams  
Also Southampton Town Records

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

ciently well done to guide them and the first attempt to settle at the west end of the Island resulted in a firm command by the Dutch to depart. Again the pioneers took to their boat and eventually found a place on the shore of Peconic Bay, where a landing could be made uninhibited. Two of the eight original "undertakers" were Edward Howell\* and Thomas Halsey, descendants of whom have been property owners in the Village since the late 1600s. Religious freedom being of prime importance, it is quite natural that the Rev. Abram Pierson soon joined the little company. The Rev. Pierson was not only the spiritual adviser but also acted as school master, scribe and law maker, and in the latter capacity he at once drew up a code of laws to govern the civil, moral and religious behavior of his flock. Following are three of the laws from the original code and while they are drastic in concept it is doubtful if enforcement was ever carried out to the letter.

"If a mans Oxe or other beast gore or bite and kill a man or woman, whether child or riper age, the beast shall be killed and noe benefit of the dead beast returned to the owner. But if the oxe or other beast were wont to push or bite in former tymes and the owner hath been told of yt and hath not kept him in, then the oxe or beast shall be forfyted and killed and the owner also put to death, or else fined to pay what the Judges and person damnified shall laye upon him.

Rebellious Children, whether they continue in Riot or Drunkennesse, after due correction from parents, or whether they curse or Smite their parents Are to be put to death.

\*A picture of Edward Howell's home in England is on file in the pictorial history of the Village.

## THE PIONEER SETTLEMENT

Drunkenness as transformeing Gods Image into a Beast is to be punished with the punishment of a beast. A Whippe for the horse and a rodde for the fooles backe."

The first settlers were promptly followed by others and as the colony grew it would be an error to assume that all were God fearing and righteous men. The Town Records reveal that it was found necessary to build a prison at an early date (1645) and also that the stocks and whipping post were well worn from frequent use. In some cases the offenses seem trivial but to accomplish their purpose law and order had to be maintained and a deviation from the prescribed form of religion, such as being a Quaker, was sufficient reason for severe punishment.

Why the "undertakers" left New England with the intent to settle on Long Island is a question with many answers; however, there are some obvious reasons which probably influenced their decision. These reasons can be summed up in a few well known facts; first of all, the climate is less rigorous than that of New England and also important, the soil is fertile, level and free of rocks, all of which reduce the difficulties of farming. The abundance of wild game, sea food, including whales and "other large fish," was undoubtedly another contributing factor in making the choice. Offshore whaling, farming and cattle raising were the three major industries upon which the hard working colonists depended for their livelihood.

The era of settlement came to a close about 1660 and on the original land grant that extended eight miles east from Canoe Place the population had increased fourfold in twenty years, and the colony had become well established on a firm foundation. The days of experiment were passed and the "under-



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

takers" no longer feared for the success of their venture. So, with confidence some of the more progressive citizens began to investigate the vast territory to the west with an idea of expansion. Captain Thomas Topping\*, a prominent townsman, recognized the value of the property beyond the colony's west boundary and in 1662 acquired for himself a large tract of land extending from Canoe Place west to Seatuck Creek (just east of Eastport village). This great acreage was bounded on the north by Peconic Bay and River and on the south by the ocean. Captain Topping's ambitious venture in the real estate business on a large scale became known as "Topping's Purchase" and has remained famous in the annals of local history down through the years. From the many references made to the matter in the town records, it is evident that the other townsmen were not pleased with the transaction and had cogent reason to question Topping's right of ownership. Several years of litigation followed until the affair was finally referred to Governor Nicolls, who ruled that the deed held by Captain Topping was invalid. In the meanwhile, the townsmen had explored the large tract and found it had great possibilities, especially for cattle grazing on the many acres of meadowlands. At a town meeting in 1666, it was voted to purchase the property from the Indians who were the rightful owners. The price paid for this valuable addition to the Township was seventy pounds plus a few trinkets. From that time forward, it became known as the Quogue Purchase, also the Qua Qua, Quaquanantuck or the Quago Purchase.

Just prior to the settlement of the legal dispute involving the famous purchase, a resolution was passed at the town meeting that is interesting in the light of later events; quote:

\* Captain Topping's house is now the Episcopal Rectory in Southampton. He moved to Connecticut after he lost title to his purchase and died there in 1687.

## THE PIONEER SETTLEMENT

### RESOLUTION

"At a town meeting March 14, 1663. It is ordered by ye maior voat of this Towne that upon ye agreement made this day concerning ye settling and disposing and paying for Quaquanantuck, that there shall never any person or persons settle there, or within ye compass of ye purchase made by ye towne or their order, of Capt. Scott, wherein ye said quaqua, is included, nor that any keepe farme or farming within ye limits of ye said purchase."

Quite obviously nothing came of the resolution and why it was adopted will always be a matter of speculation.

Although the Quogue Purchase was an important acquisition to the town as a whole, its development came slowly. This fact is readily understood when it is realized that the entire area was a vast wilderness that could only be traversed by following Indian trail on horseback. The townsmen had seemed confident of a favorable decision from Governor Nicolls inasmuch as plans for developing the "Purchase" were underway before the question of ownership had been settled. At a town meeting held in December 1665, a group of men were appointed to "lay out the premises". The men appointed for this work were called "*layers out*" and it was their duty to survey and divide certain sections into lots. Considerable time elapsed before this could be accomplished, so it was not until about 1675 that the first real estate boom at the western end of the Township began in earnest. Soon after the "*layers out*" had finished the division to some extent, drawings were held in Southampton on appointed days, at which time any person in good standing could draw as many lots as he cared to buy.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

Beginning in about 1680, investment in the new development became very popular and numerous lots were taken up in what is now Westhampton Beach. Originally, the village was laid out in three distinct sections; the eastern part from Aspatuck Creek and Quantuck Bay extending west to Moneybogue\* (or Aunt Harriet's) Creek was called Catchaponack; Potunk was the centre of the village including the property from Moneybogue west to Oneck Drain, while the large area west of Oneck Drain to Oneck Creek was and is still called Oneck\*\*. Hezekiah Howell and Jonathan Raynor were the first to buy acreage in Catchaponack\*\*\*, and their descendants are still property owners in this section. Lands in Potunk were purchased by John Jessup and Thomas Stevens and some of the property is still held by the Jessup and Stevens families. Thomas and Isaac Halsey were the first proprietors of Oneck but at this time their holdings have all passed out of the Halsey family.

Other familiar local names, such as Bishop, Cook, Rogers and Jagger, also appear in the records as landowners in the Quogue Purchase at an early date.

Eventually, all three divisions of the new settlement, became known as Catchaponack.\*\*\*\* The names given to the various localities, bays, creeks, etc. came from the Indian language and the meanings are as follows:

Catchaponack—Kitche-Pen-Auk—a place where  
large roots grow

Potunk—a place where the foot sinks  
into the mud

\* Also Monagong in the records. Spelling was not a strong point with the early scribes, which probably accounts for the various ways names appear.

\*\* Also Ononek.

\*\*\* Also Ketchaponack and eight other variations in spelling.

\*\*\*\* "Indian Place Names of Long Island" by William Wallace Tooker.



## THE PIONEER SETTLEMENT

Oneck—a curve or bend in the shore  
line

Moneybogue (Monaboug)—  
a place filled with water

Aspatuck—a high place

Quantuck (probably an abbreviation of  
Quaquanantuck)—a long, tidal stream

Shinnecock—a large, level plain

Quogue—round clam

Quiogue—small, round clam

Speonk—to the edge, margin or border  
of a stream

Where and by whom the first homes in the Village were built cannot now be definitely determined. However, the proceedings of a Town meeting on March 14, 1663 record an allotment of "five acres of salt marsh in Ketchaponack Neck" to one Henry Pierson. From this fact it would seem probable that the use of meadowlands for cattle grazing began at about that time. The small cabins used by the farm hands, who watched over the herds during the summer seasons, were the first houses but cannot be considered permanent homes. Hezekiah Howell provided such quarters for his help before he built a home on the corner of Main Street and Aspatuck Brook Road. The old Howell homestead dates back to 1727 and that date seems justified in view of the fact that Hezekiah petitioned the Town meeting in 1732 for "an additional acre adjoining my house in Catchaponack". Jonathan Raynor, Jr., was among the first to draw for lots in the Quogue Purchase; so, undoubtedly, his permanent home was built in about the same period. The original Raynor homestead was located midway between the Main Street and the beach on Beach Lane. In 1861 the house was sold by

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

Captain Elijah Raynor to Silas Tuttle but, unfortunately, it was destroyed by fire twenty years later. Silas Tuttle, Jr., rebuilt on the same site and the "new" house is known as the Tuttle homestead. The Tuttles had been among the first settlers at Southold, L. I. and the branch of the family who moved to the south shore lived for a number of years in Speonk (Remsenburg) before coming to Catchaponack.

John Jessup selected the corner of Main Street and Potunk Lane for the site of his house, but the date it was built is not known. The spacious old house served the family for six generations before it was torn down in 1913. The community lost a typical colonial dwelling and an historic landmark when the Jessup homestead was removed.

On his extensive acreage in Potunk, Thomas Stevens built his farmhouse opposite a point where Oneck Road abutts Potunk Lane. Many years later when part of the farm was sold to Mr. Cutter in 1880, the main part of the homestead was moved to the lower end of Moneybogue Lane and is still the home of the late Howell Steven's family. A wing from the original building was incorporated into the home of the late Mitchell Stevens on Main Street (now Medical Group building). At the time the house was moved and remodeled, a brick stamped 1735 was found in the chimney which probably indicates the date it was built.

The Griffing homestead on East Main Street was sold by William Albertson in 1803 to Stephen Griffing, great-grandfather of the present Stephen F. Griffing, Sr. It was the largest of the early houses and was probably built for a tavern and boarding-house, which purpose it served for many years. As a tavern in the stage coach days, it was the overnight stop on the regular weekly run from Sag Harbor to New York and in later years

## THE PIONEER SETTLEMENT

was a boarding place for summer visitors. In 1930 the building was moved back from the street, turned completely around and remodeled so that there remains no semblance of the original house.

The Foster homestead, as it is sometimes called, on East Main Street is perhaps the oldest house in the Village and is an excellent example of colonial architecture. Property changed hands so frequently in early times that it is impossible to determine now by whom the house was built or in what year. From Miss Augusta Meeker, the present owner, it is learned that her grandfather purchased the property in 1835 from Stephen Russell. Although Russell had bought the place from Grant Bowers, it is still quite possible that William Russell, who acquired lands here in 1663, may have been the first owner.

Gradually highways were laid out and fences built to mark property lines but the Village grew slowly and remained a small hamlet for nearly a century and a half. The fences in early times were of two types, either the split rail or the ones made by looped trees but the latter type was used most generally because only the natural material at hand was needed for construction. This kind of fence was made by digging a ditch and throwing up a mound of earth along which small trees were partly cut and bent over to form an entanglement that made an effective barrier to keep the cattle within bounds. Evidences of the old lopped or bent tree fences can be seen at several places in the Village. A row of old trees that were once a fence are still well preserved on the east side of Potunk Lane just inside the property line of Elijah P. Raynor and P. J. Prentice, while others can be found along Depot Road on the west side of the High School grounds.

Trade and communication with the outside world was very limited in colonial days and the settlers were obliged to



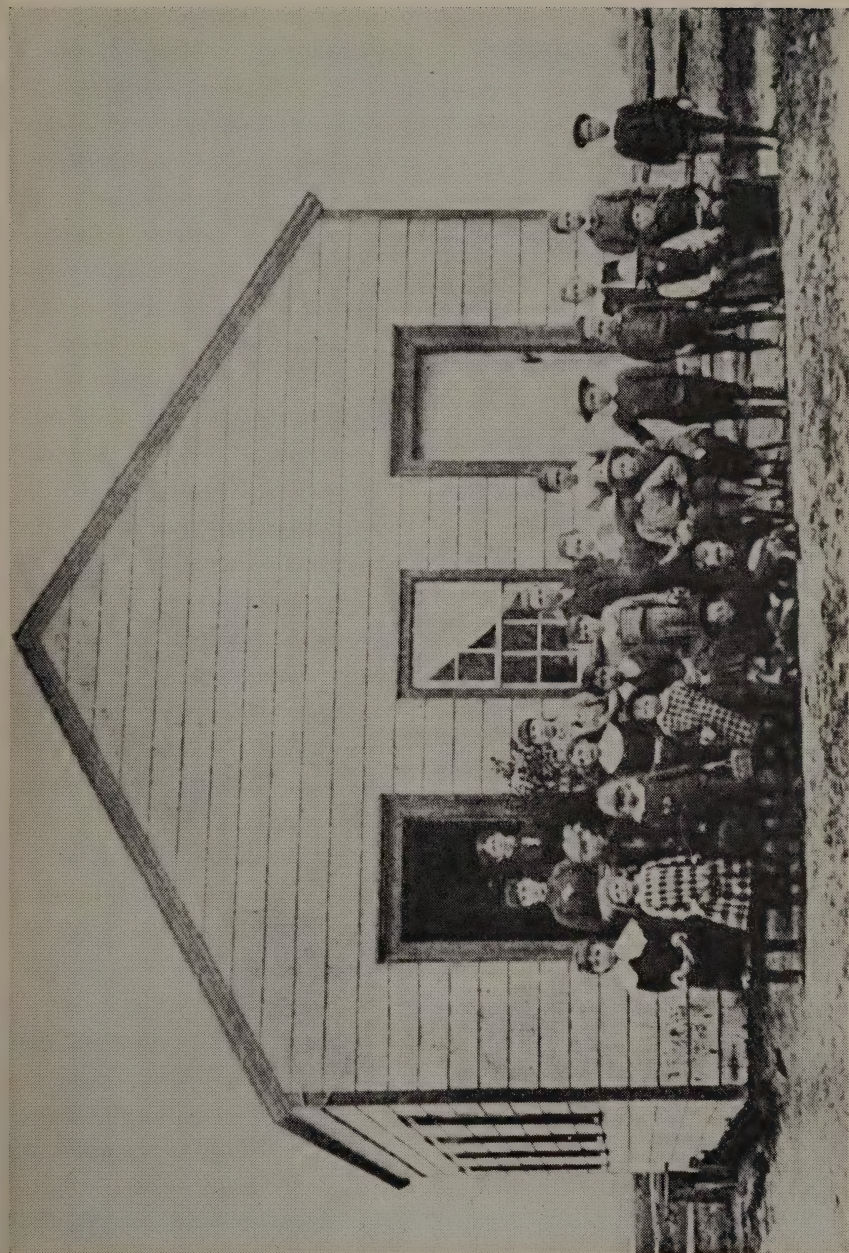
## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

maintain themselves and supply all their needs by diligence and hard work. Quite naturally, the pioneers in Catchaponack patterned their lives in the same way as the colony of Southampton had done, by relying on farming and whaling for the necessities of life. The value of whale oil had been appreciated by the settlers from the time of their arrival on eastern Long Island, and by 1687 seven whaling companies had been organized in the township and one of the number was owned by "John Jessup & Co. of Catchaponack". Whaling has long since ceased to be an occupation, but Edward Stevens and his son, Ira, continue to farm part of the land that has come down to them from their ancestors.

For a hundred years or so after Catchaponack was settled, life flowed along in a quiet, simple and hard-working manner with little to divert the people from the serious business of providing for the everyday needs. The peaceful way of life began to change in 1775 when echoes of war were heard from the growing conflicts between the British and the New England colonists.

Following the defeat of Washington's army in the historic battle of Long Island in August 1776, the future seemed dark for all the eastern part of the Island. The failure of that encounter left the inhabitants of the Southampton Township cut off from the other colonies, affording little opportunity to further the cause in which they were wholeheartedly in accord. In a short time, the people found themselves at the mercy of the British troops who occupied the Island for the duration of the war.

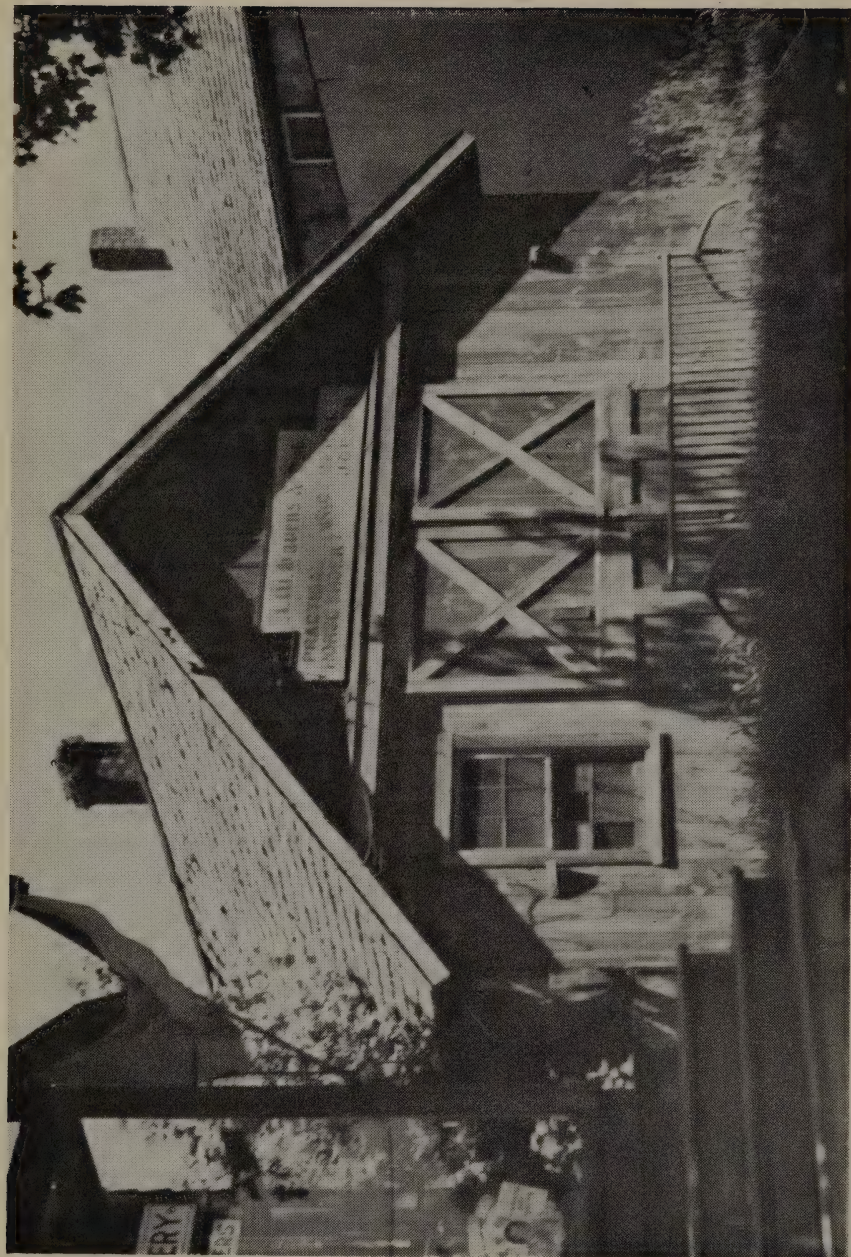
As the struggle took on a more serious aspect, the townsmen at Southampton drew up what was called the "Articles of Association" in August 1776 and it was in a sense a local declaration of independence. Every able-bodied man in the town, who



"RED" SCHOOLHOUSE, MAIN STREET

Photo about 1880





HAVENS' BLACKSMITH SHOP, MAIN STREET

Photo 1946



## THE PIONEER SETTLEMENT

had reached the age of sixteen years or more with the exception of two, signed the document, thereby pledging to aid in every way possible the fight to free the colonies of British rule. This was indeed a courageous step because each signed knew that, if discovered, rough treatment would be meted out by the enemy.

A few days later in August of the same year, the English Governor Tryon issued a decree ordering all men in the colony to sign an oath of allegiance to the English Crown. Quite naturally, this was distasteful to the townsmen who, knowing they must comply or lose their heads, decided more could be accomplished alive than dead and so concurred, probably with tongue in cheek.

Catchaponack was not affected as seriously by the forces of war as were Southampton and the other eastern villages. The location of those villages made invasion by water a comparatively simple matter and, consequently, the section was preyed upon by the invading troops, who overran the towns, carrying off cattle, stores of grain and other food stuffs. As a result the unfortunate people suffered such losses in property that they were reduced to the brink of ruin. Many, especially the signers of the "Articles", made their escape to New England, taking with them all the grain, cattle and household goods that could be transported hurriedly.

With no convenient harbors and the lack of roads at the time, the residents of Catchaponack were so situated that any means of escape was impossible, and by the same token any large scale invasion by the enemy was equally difficult to accomplish. During the war years the people of the Village carried on in a more or less normal way, considering that they were under constant surveillance by small companies of British officers and men. The soldiers were quartered during their tour of duty here in the Jessup homestead on Main Street, the Halsey home on

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

Oneck and the Daniel Foster house (The Homestead)\* in Quiogue. The behavior of the troops occupying the Village has been a tradition in both the Jessup and Halsey families through the succeeding years. From the Jessups, it is interesting to learn that the soldiers stationed in their home were a gentlemanly sort and were considerate of the family who continued to live in part of the house. The experience of the Halsey family was quite contrary, for there the troops seem to have been an ugly lot and threatened to kill Mrs. Halsey if she disturbed them while attending to her household duties.

After the hard-won victory in 1784, the people of the Southampton colony went to work with their usual vigor to repair the damages wrought by nearly seven years of war. Rehabilitation had progressed well until 1812, when the new nation was faced with another war. While this conflict did not reach the proportions of the first one, there was a period when the eastern villages were seriously threatened by a British fleet that sailed into Gardiner's Bay. Catchaponack had little reason for alarm and was not greatly affected by this last struggle for independence.

Before going on to the next steps in the development of the Village, brief mention must be made of the Indians who inhabited this area for countless centuries before the white men came. All that remains now of the original land owners are the arrow points and various types of stone implements that have been found along the creeks and in the fields, giving mute testimony to a people and way of life long since vanished\*\*. The Shinnecock tribe was scattered in numerous settlements throughout Southampton Township and, like all the other tribes on Long Island, were part of the great Algonquin family. By and large

\* See L. I. Forum Dec. 1950

\*\* Many Indian articles have been found on the Stevens property mostly along Aspatuck Creek.

## THE PIONEER SETTLEMENT

the Indians in this section were a peaceful people and accepted the colonists without serious resentment and often gave much needed assistance in return for useful articles, new to them, that the white men offered. A few legends have been handed down from generation to generation, and one that illustrates the kindly interest of the redman in his new neighbors comes from the Howell family. When the first Howell landowner was looking for a home site in Catchaponack and had decided to build on the shore of Quantuck Bay, he was advised by an Indian friend to go further inland to avoid high tides and dampness.

The Indian population appears to have been large at one time, but no accurate estimate of their numbers has ever been recorded. At the time the colonists arrived, it was evident that the red race was deteriorating and the decline continued until at present it is quite doubtful if there is a single Indian who can trace an unbroken line back to the original tribe.

The few Indians who still claim a relationship to the ancient tribe live on their reservation at Shinnecock. Certain traditions continue to be followed, including the three day Pow-wow held each year at the close of the summer season when members of tribes come from other parts of the country to join in the festivities. The last true male descendants of the Shinnecocks were drowned in 1875 attempting to rescue the crew of a ship that had been driven ashore near Mecox during a severe winter storm.



## II

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

#### *Transportation*

At the time when the villages and towns on the east end of Long Island were founded, New York and the western end of the Island were occupied by the Dutch, with whom the English settlers had never been on friendly terms. Even after the "West End" fell into the hands of the English, the Colonists still did not look with favor on trade through the Port of New York. Both by oath of allegiance and tradition the people living at the "East End" were firmly bound to New England and preferred to carry on trade and business relations with the people in whom the confidence and understanding were mutual.

Perhaps this accounts, in a measure, for the fact that no attempt had been made for a hundred years or more to open highways through the Island and establish overland trade routes. Until after the Revolution the few roads in existence were little more than sandy trails, and it was not until the early 1800s that steps were taken to improve the conditions. Another and more important reason for the long neglected highways was due to the convenient harbors along both the north and south forks, and from these harbors all trade and communication with the outside world were exchanged from the earliest days of the colonies. Packet boats sailed across the Sound to the ports in New England, and occasionally to New York, transporting considerable quantities of freight besides passengers and mail.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

In spite of the bad roads, a Post Rider in 1765 made frequent trips from Brooklyn to eastern Long Island, delivering mail and reporting news to the various settlements along the way. The first stage coach route was established in 1772 and made a weekly circuit of the Island, going via Riverhead on the north side, then to Sag Harbor and returning by way of the south shore. The one hundred and ten mile journey from Brooklyn to Sag Harbor required three days of travel and a one way fare cost \$2.25.\* When hostilities broke out in 1775, the stage coach route was discontinued until after the war. Both the Post Rider and the stage coach delivered mail at Beaver Dam (Westhampton) for the residents of the surrounding communities.

Overland travel was destined for a drastic change when rumors of a railroad to be built through the Island gave way to fact. The first line of the Long Island Rail Road was extended from Jamaica to Greenport in 1844, and the day it was opened to the public was marked by great pomp and ceremony. However, some of the local residents were most skeptical of this new and "speedy" mode of travel and were not willing to accept the idea until they had been assured by officials of the company that a speed of thirty or forty miles per hour had proved safe in other parts of the country.

The first two locomotives were called "Ariel" and "Post Boy" and were fueled with cord wood. This opened a new field of occupation for some of the Islanders, who contracted with the company to supply cord wood at various stations along the route. It was not a great many years, however, before a heavier type of engine was built and then the use of soft coal proved more practical.

Catchaponack did not enjoy the real benefits of the railroad until 1870, when a branch line was built from Manorville

\* See Gabriel Furman's "Antiquities of Long Island"

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

to Eastport and on to Sag Harbor. The famous "Cannon Ball,"\* a crack train from New York to the Hamptons, ran over this route for more than fifty years. Because of maintenance problems, the use of that section of the line between Manorville and Eastport was abandoned during the second World War and the tracks were removed in the winter of 1950. The railroad flourished for several years and continued to push construction eastward until the Montauk Division was finished in 1878-79.

In the latter part of 1949 the steam locomotives, that had been in use for some time, became so worn and costly to operate that gradually replacements were made with diesel engines, which now haul all the passenger trains to this end of the Island. At present, a single fare from Westhampton to New York costs \$3.02 and the trip is made in slightly less than two hours (if all goes well).

After a comparatively brief period of prosperity, the railroad was faced with a serious obstacle when the automobile and heavy duty trucks with trailers began to appear on the highways. Nowadays, the greatest part of the produce to and from the Island is shipped by truck, which has reduced the rail freight business to a near vanishing point. This coupled with other circumstances, too involved to discuss here, has thrown the railroad into a state of bankruptcy and, while efforts have been made in recent months to improve the service, it is quite doubtful if the Long Island Rail Road can regain the patronage it had in the '90s and the early part of this century.

A postscript can be added to this brief history of the railroad to record events which gave it a sad and regrettable push downward. Two serious accidents occurred in 1950, one in February and another in November, taking a toll of more than a hun-

\* At one time reputed to be the fastest train in the world



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

dred lives and injuring scores of others. Investigations followed and very soon safety devices were installed to eliminate the possibility of such tragedies in the future.

The automobile progressed rapidly from the novelty stage to one of importance as a practical means of transportation. As the motor car became increasingly popular, the "horse and buggy days" gradually receded into the past and the country entered a new era in travel.

Evidences of this were seen in the Village in 1914 when Herbert O'Cané replaced his horsedrawn stage with a motor bus. Although its lines were in keeping with other motor vehicles of that day, modern streamlining would make it appear most crude and cumbersome. Formerly, passengers arriving by train had been driven to their destinations in private carriages or by horse-drawn stages. Now and for the past twenty-five years, a taxi service has furnished transportation when needed for the people of the community.

At about the turn of the century, the use of automobiles for business and pleasure increased steadily as the performance became more reliable. The Ford car was among the first to be manufactured and in 1906 sold for around \$500.00. The early models of Cadillacs had only one cylinder and during the same period cost about \$800.00. Prices have advanced considerably through the years, but the quality of modern cars has improved and they now have many features which were unheard of when the first automobiles were built. In 1950 a Ford could be bought for \$1,750.00, and in the same year a Cadillac cost around \$3,500.00 or slightly less, depending on the model.

Stephen Griffing, Sr. has the distinction of being the first local resident to own a pleasure car, which he bought in New York in 1903.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

The bicycle was another mode of transportation, which came into its own shortly before the automobile took its place in the field of modern travel. Various kinds of high-wheel bicycles had been in use for many years, but it was not until about 1890 that a practical type with pneumatic tires was made available. For a decade or more, bicycling was a popular fad with both men and women. Some enthusiastic riders enjoyed the sport to the extent that a hundred mile ride in a day was a common occurrence. Soon after the automobile "came in", bicycles lost favor but were restored to popularity again in 1940, when gasoline rationing prevented the usual free use of motor cars. Since the close of the second World War, bicycles have continued to be a popular means of transportation, especially with school children.

A much needed service was established in 1943, when a bus line began scheduled trips through the Village. Since then, passengers may go to Riverhead and, with a change to another line, proceed to any of the towns along the North Fork as far as Orient or along the South Fork to Easthampton. Travelling west, via the south shore, it would be possible to reach New York by bus with numerous changes and a considerable amount of time.

During the summer seasons of 1946-47, the Long Island Airlines operated an aeroplane service between New York and some of the eastern villages. The "old air field" (now Coca Cola station) on the Riverhead Road was used as the base for Westhampton, while the New York terminal was at 23rd Street and the East River. A single trip fare from Westhampton to Manhattan cost \$7.40. The first attempt to establish a public air service on the Island proved unsuccessful, and after two seasons the project was discontinued, but it is highly probable that it may be resumed at a later date.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

### *Roads*

The condition of the highways improved considerably after the early part of the 1800's but they remained all "dirt" roads until the beginning of this century. Such roads answered well enough for horse-drawn vehicles but proved most unsatisfactory for automobile travel. This problem was solved to some extent around 1902-03 by coating the important highways with road oil, which made a hard surface and eliminated the dust and mud menace. Various methods of road surfacing have been used but none have proved more successful for automobile travel than paving with concrete and in more recent years with "black top." Westhampton Beach had its first paving in 1918 when concrete was laid on Mill Road, and in 1925 Main Street from the Bank corner west through the business section received the same treatment. It is interesting to note that, although the main street through the Village had been used as a thoroughfare for more than two hundred years, an official survey was not made until 1914, when the boundary lines were determined. Strangely enough, Beach Lane had been surveyed and recorded as a highway in 1859.

Many new roads were opened during the first quarter of this century to supply the demand for building sites by the increasing population in the Village. Among the roads laid out in that era are: North Beach Lane, Church Street, Howell Lane, Woodland Avenue, Sunset Avenue (South), Lilac Road, Liberty Avenue, Rogers Avenue, Mitchell Lane and South Library Avenue.

Property along the ocean front was not considered of any importance when Catchaponack was young, but after the Dune Road was built the value of real estate increased enormously. Road construction on the sandy beach required many loads of



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

top soil from the mainland, making the operation a slow and costly one. The section from Beach Lane Bridge east to the Quogue line was the first to be built in 1905, and five years later the road from Beach Lane west to Jessup's Bridge was finished. Each year following, another mile or two was added until, eventually, the road on the beach extended west to the Brookhaven Town line. Meanwhile, road construction had pushed east through Quogue and beyond, finally making it possible to drive along the Dune Road to Southampton. This pleasant ride on the beach was no longer possible after the hurricane (1938) opened a wide inlet opposite Hampton Bays.

At one time, long years ago, the Main Street continued west through the present Club property to Oneck and School Street extended south of South Country Road and also terminated in Oneck.

### *Bridges*

Today, it is difficult to picture the Village as it was a number of years ago when a small stream (Aunt Harriet's Creek) ran across Main Street, slightly east of the Seeley property. There are still people living here who remember the foot bridge over the "swamp" and the little pond just north of it, where children played on the ice in the winter. Ordinarily, the stream was not deep and caused little inconvenience to travel on the roadway.

The bridge on East Main Street between Westhampton Beach and Quogue has always been known as "Turkey Bridge" and acquired the name through an interesting story. For years, the villagers either had to be ferried across Aspatuck Creek to attend service at the Presbyterian Church or were obliged to take the longer route farther north, where the creek was shallow and could be forded. This procedure became tedious after a while,

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

and it was Silas Tuttle who had a brilliant idea and persuaded some of the men of the congregation to help him build a bridge over the creek. In due time, the bridge was completed (about 1873), and the accomplishment was celebrated with a picnic consisting of a turkey dinner, which was held on the east bank of the stream. The gala affair was enjoyed by the builders, their families and friends. The original bridge has long since been replaced by one more substantial and in keeping with the present day needs.

At the time Catchaponack was settled, the waterway between the mainland and the beach was little more than a ditch in some places. This was true at a point just east of Beach Lane and farmers oftentimes drove their teams across the shallow canal to harvest salt hay on the beach meadows. One of the first bridges to span the canal was built at the lower end of Beach Lane and was a crude wooden affair with a slot in the center arranged with a hinged plank, which could be turned back to allow space for sail boat masts to pass through. No doubt, the span just described was replaced more than once before Silas Jessup, of Quogue, was employed in 1880 to design and build a "new" bridge at the foot of Beach Lane. At the time, Mr. Jessup's design was considered ingenious, it being a draw bridge of wood construction operated by weights (barrels filled with concrete) and winches turned by manpower.

The waterway connecting Moriches and Shinnecock Bays was dredged and widened in 1895, which made it necessary to replace the old wooden bridge with a turnstile type built of steel and masonry. It was so designed that the road bed, which rested on a large concrete pier in the centre of the canal, could be turned parallel with the sides of the waterway, allowing ample space for sail and power boats of good size to pass through. The slow

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

operation of turning the road bed by manpower was not altogether satisfactory and frequently caused long delays in travel to and from the beach. The present bridge on Beach Lane, which is modern in design and electrically controlled, was completed and opened to the public in 1935.

The history of the Jessup Bridge is a long story and dates back to 1880, when Nathan C. Jessup was granted permission by the Southampton Town Trustees to build a bridge connecting his property at Potunk with the beach. Mr. Jessup, who was an eccentric character, constructed a bridge over the canal at considerable expense to himself but, in so doing, failed to comply with the terms of his permit. The Town Trustees took exception to the way the work had been done and, as a result, a legal controversy began which dragged through the courts for nearly seventeen years.\* Finally, Mr. Jessup won a favorable decision in the Court of Appeals, which was upheld in the Supreme Court of the United States.\*\* Meanwhile, his health had failed and he died in February 1910. A few months after Mr. Jessup's death, the large tract of land, including a portion of the beach, which he had owned on Potunk was sold to a group of prominent businessmen, who formed the West Bay Company. Immediately development began with the opening of a public highway to the beach called Jessup Lane, which is a continuation of Potunk Lane. What remained of the famous "Jessup Bridge" was demolished in 1911 and replaced with a turnstile bridge similar to the one built a few years before at Beach Lane. A short time after the "West Bay Bridge" was completed, it was sold by the company to the Town of Southampton. After serving the need for a time, this bridge was replaced by a more efficient one to accommodate the increasing travel to and from the beach. A celebration with a

\* See Southampton Town Trustee Records Vol. 7, Part 3, Page 127.

\*\* Also printed record in Historical Files of the Village of Westhampton Beach



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

parade and speeches marked the opening on December 12, 1928 of the first electrically controlled bridge in the Village. The bridge and the approaches suffered serious damage in September, 1938 and repairs were not completed until the following spring.

### *Communications*

The operation of a postal system was not successfully established in the Colonies until just before the Revolutionary War, and the few letters passing overland between the towns and scattered settlements were carried by Post Rider and stage coach. The early postal service was slow, irregular and the rate for sending an ordinary letter was costly. Usually the fee was collected upon delivery, so that no one cared to receive a letter unless it was of major importance. An old saying of those days was in effect: "Think of me often but write to me seldom".

Locally the designated place for postal delivery was at Beaver Dam (Westhampton)\* where all the mail brought by Post Rider, stage coach and later the railroad was received for the surrounding neighborhood. During this era it was the custom for one of the men to ride horseback to Beaver Dam and collect the mail for Catchaponack. The letters were placed in boxes under the stairs in the Jessup homestead, where they would remain until called for by the residents. Similar boxes, or perhaps the same ones, were later placed, for the sake of convenience, in the store of Raynor and Bishop, but in neither case did these boxes constitute an official Post Office.

Usually changes in a community from one generation to another come so slowly that they are scarcely noticed, but the year 1880 brought important changes that marked a milestone in the development of Catchaponack. Two events of that year

\* Beaver Dam Post Office records of 1826-27 on file at the Historical Department of the Village

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

pointed toward a new progress that has continued steadily ever since. Through the efforts of some local citizens, the first Post Office was established and at the same time the old Indian name of Catchaponack\* was discarded and the Village was renamed Westhampton Center\*. After a short time the new name was not considered fitting and only lasted until 1891 when another change was made and the Village became Westhampton Beach. The complications arising from the various ways of spelling Catchaponack undoubtedly had some bearing upon the desire for a name more spellable.

The first official Post Office in the Village occupied a corner in the general store of Raynor and Bishop on the south side of Main Street near the corner of Beach Lane. Charles E. Raynor was the first Postmaster, receiving the appointment from President Arthur. It was a long-time custom for the President to appoint Postmasters, usually from recommendations made by local political leaders; consequently, each change of party in the national administration brought about changes in local postal officials. Ernest H. Bishop was the next appointee following the inauguration of President Cleveland in 1885. Four years later, when Winfield Jessup became the third Postmaster under the Harrison administration, Mr. Bishop had terminated his partnership with Mr. Raynor and moved the Post Office, together with his store, to the new location on Main Street (now Newins Department Store).

Soon after the turn of the century, the rapid development of the Village called for larger Post Office facilities and in about 1909, when Elijah P. Raynor (son of Charles E. Raynor) was appointed to the position, the office was moved to the extreme west end of the Grimshaw and Redfield block (now Main Street

\*Catchaponack was referred to as Westhampton in 1796. See Town Trustee Records Part II, pg. 24  
page 24

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

Apartments). Next in succession was Mrs. Mabel B. Williams who, under the Wilson Administration, received an appointment making her the first Postmistress in the history of the Village. Mrs. Williams filled the position from 1913 until 1921, and after a lapse of several years was given another appointment in 1934 and continued until 1944 when she retired. During Mrs. Williams' first term, the Post Office was moved again and for the first time occupied a building used exclusively for handling the mail. E. H. Bishop built the new office in 1914 (now Straw's Stationery Store), and it was rented by the Government until 1940 when the Post Office was permanently located in the present building.

Others who have served as Postmasters are:

William Raynor 1921-23; Maurice Tuttle 1923-29; Eugene Nichols 1929-33 and, following Mrs. Williams' retirement, Fred Francais 1944- .

### *Telegraph and Telephone*

A progressive step toward a wider and speedier means of communication came in 1895 when a telegraph office was opened in the Village. Space was also found for it in the Raynor and Bishop store and, with his other duties, Mr. Bishop found time to act as operator. Mortimer Howell was influential in bringing about this new system of communication to the Village and, to promote the installation, provided from his woodlands large trees which were used to carry the wires from the Railroad Station to the local office.

In the same year another forward step was taken locally in modern communication. A telephone office was opened in Quogue that also served Westhampton Beach and, while the service was primitive then compared to the present, the number of subscribers\* increased rapidly. It was not until 1922, however,

\* List of first subscribers on file in the Historical Department of the Village



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

that the first central office was established in the Village, and it was located for a time in the building on Main Street owned by A. E. White. The telephone centre was moved to its present site on Library Avenue in 1930, and through this modern exchange Quogue is served by a dial system. The growth in the use of the telephone is indicated by the following figures: in 1940 there were 875 subscribers and in 1949 the number had increased to 1200, making an average of 3500 calls in an "off season" day.

### *Electricity*

#### *Light*

#### *Heat*

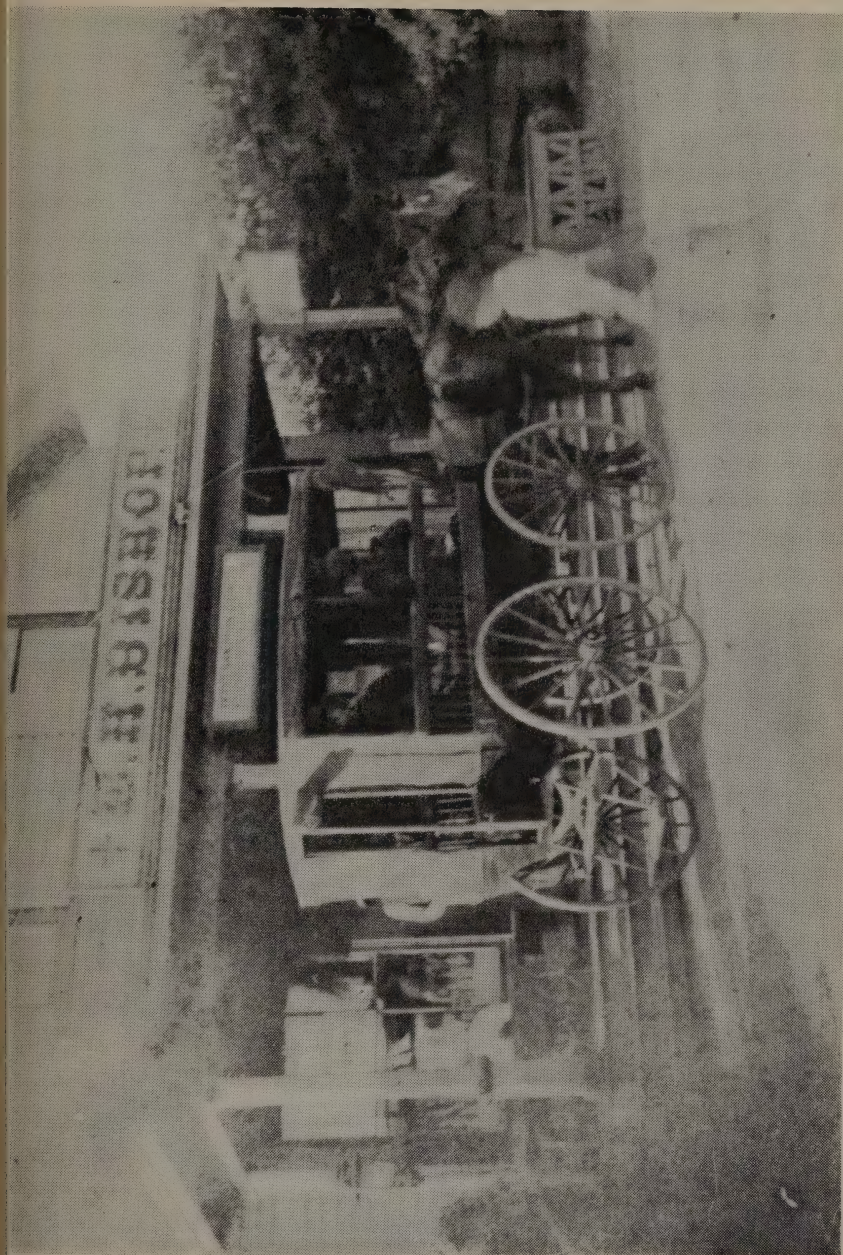
#### *Power*

Without doubt, electric power had contributed more to the social and economic well-being of the country than any other single invention in the modern age. The children of this generation accept all the electrical appliances now in use without realizing that most of them were unheard of only fifty years ago.

Long before Mr. B. Franklin flew his famous kite, the ancestors who settled Long Island had to depend upon flickering tallow candles (made at home) for illumination, or in some cases whale oil lamps were used by those fortunate to have them. Green pine knots thrown into the open fireplace also gave a light sufficient to fill the need between supper and bedtime.

When petroleum was discovered in the middle of the last century (about 1845), kerosene lamps were hailed as a great improvement in lighting and soon were in popular use. However, there are still many women about, who have not forgotten the horrors of cleaning and filling oil lamps!

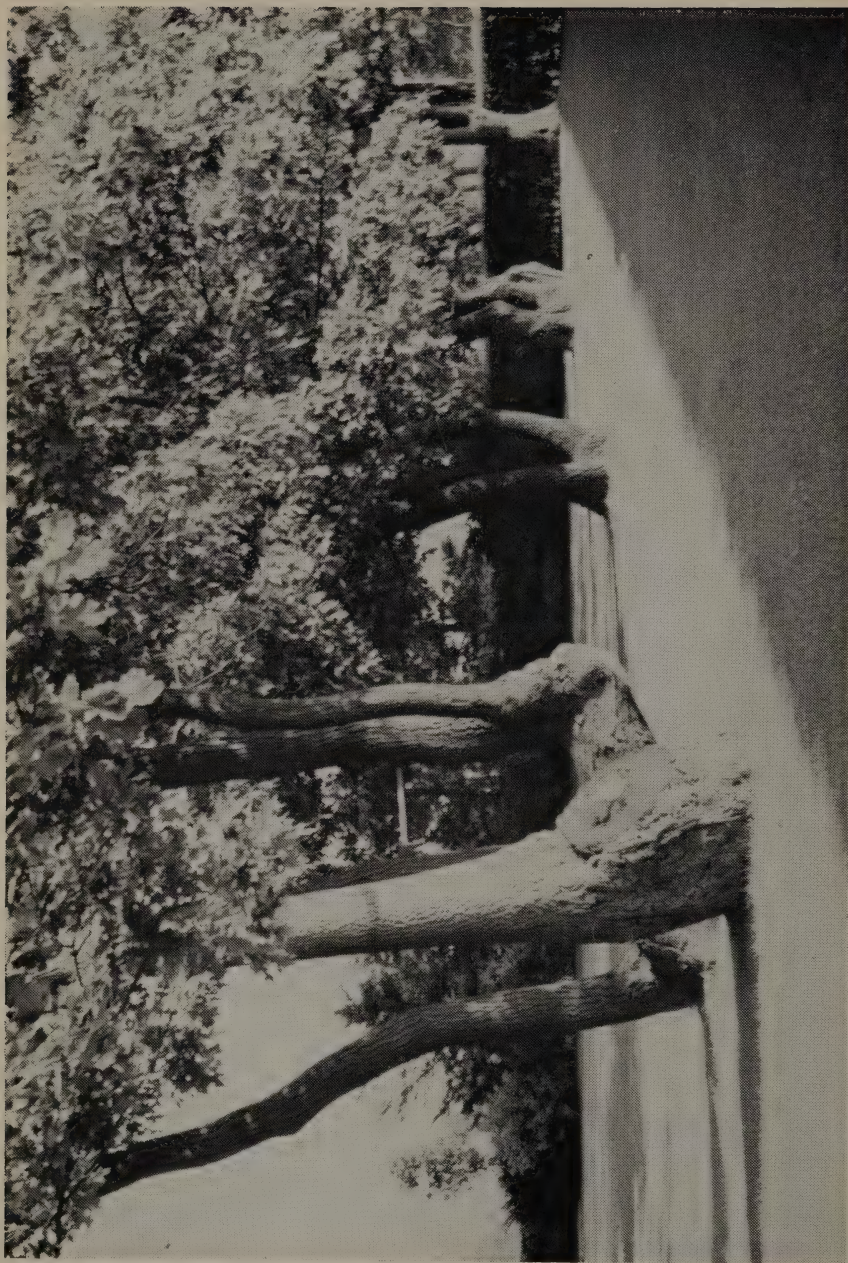
The old methods of lighting and heating, etc. were destined for a change when the Long Island Lighting Company ran



OLD STAGE — E. H. BISHOP'S STORE

Photo about 1900





REMAINS OF A BENT TREE FENCE



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

a power line from the Riverhead plant to the Village in 1910. Without delay a lighting district was created and street lights were placed at intervals along the main highways. Prior to the electric street lamps, however, there had been an attempt made in the late 1890s to light the business section of the Village with gas. The gas lights were the acetylene type and were supplied by a tank at the base of each post. The time and attention required for this sort of lighting was so great and the results so indifferent that gas illumination was discarded even before electric lights were placed along the streets.

Gradually homes and places of business were wired for electricity and the old kerosene lamps were either discarded or relegated to a place on a top shelf, only to be used again in case of emergency. Electric current has made possible all sorts of labor saving devices for the home, which have reduced the drudgery and increased the efficiency of housekeeping. The list of electrical appliances to be found in most homes now-a-days includes: vacuum cleaners, washers for laundry and dishes, irons, ranges, water pumps and a host of smaller implements. In recent years, there has been a trend in favor of electric ranges for cooking, but the majority of homes, hotels, etc. are still using gas ranges. At present, there are no gas mains in the Village, which makes it necessary for gas equipment to be fed by tank or "bottled gas" and it is supplied by commercial gas companies. The old wood and coal burning kitchen stoves have almost passed out of existence and the few to be found now are looked upon as old-fashioned curiosities.

The radio and television are two products of electrical science which have been developed in recent years and have had a far reaching effect upon the present day living. Great advances in radio communication were made during World War I and

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

sets for home use were available in about 1920 or shortly after the close of the War. In spite of the fact that many improvements have been made since that time, the radio has now fallen into second place while the television has taken the lead in home entertainment. Even before the second World War, considerable progress had been made with television and further progress during the War resulted in well perfected sets for civilian use soon afterward. One of the first televisions in Westhampton Beach was installed in the Patio Hotel by Herman F. Bishop in 1939 and, while the reception often left much to be desired, it was looked at with awe and wonder.

After considering the advancements made by science in the last half century, all taken for granted now, the primitive living conditions prevailing for many years after Catchaponack was settled seem unbelievable by comparison. Before the coal and wood burning stoves came into existence in the early 1800,s, fireplaces provided the only heat in the homes for both cooking and warmth. A large part of the food in those days was prepared in an iron kettle hung on a crane over the open fire and the kettle usually contained a stew made of meat, potatoes and turnips. A brick oven, generally built beside the fireplace, was used for baking and it was an important part of the household equipment. A roaring fire was made in the oven each Saturday and, when it was sufficiently hot, the coals and ashes were raked out and the oven was then ready for use. In the meanwhile, the housewife made ready numerous loaves of bread, pies, cookies, etc. to be baked at intervals as the oven became a suitable temperature. The supply made each week was sufficient to satisfy the family's appetite until the next baking day.

Soon after the cook stove was introduced to replace the open hearth and brick oven, it was followed by the "parlor stove",

which at first was wood burning and later fueled with coal. The parlor stove was usually cylindrical in design and often elaborately embellished with nickel trimmings, adding an ornamental note to the "front" room of the proud possessor. The soft glow of the coal fire within could be seen through the mica windows in the door and, without doubt, lent a comfortable, cosy atmosphere to a room which cannot be equalled even in this day of modern living.

South Country Road was referred to, in many old deeds, as Stove Street and it acquired that name through the fact that the first stove in the Village was in a house located in the neighborhood.

Toward the close of the last century, central heating came into being and offered greater possibilities for comfort than any other method used formerly. The first central systems were the hot air type and, while it was thought luxurious to have the entire house livable in winter, the results were not always successful, especially in country homes. Furnaces producing steam and hot water were later developed and with improvements through the years systems of both types have been made practical and are now standard for homes and public buildings. All central heating units were fueled with coal until about 1920 when burners supplied by fuel oil appeared in the market and showed promise of revolutionizing the old methods of heating. As is usual, the first attempts with oil burners were not altogether successful but added improvements have by now brought oil heaters to such a point of perfection that the coal burning furnaces are gradually being discarded. The most modern heating at present is called "radiant heat" and this system consists of a series of pipes laid in the concrete floor of the house, but this method is not in general use and can only be installed in a building which has been designed for it.



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

### *Water Supply*

Westhampton Beach has been favored with many blessings but perhaps with none more important than an abundance of fresh, pure water. It was especially important to the early settlers, who had only to dig a well to secure good water supply. Some years passed before pumps of various kinds were used, and at first these were placed somewhere in the backyard for the "convenience" of the house and the barnyard. There was a time, and not too many years since, when a country housewife who was fortunate enough to have a pump and sink in her kitchen really enjoyed "modern luxury".

Both wells and pumps answered the need after a fashion until the 1890s, when plumbing was added to the list of improvements in living conditions. The problem of the increased water supply for bathrooms, etc. was met by windmill pumps with large tanks that provided abundantly with minimum expense and effort. In this locality where a breeze can be counted on every day, the wind pumps were practical and popular. Locally, the windmills were so numerous at one period that the Village was jokingly referred to as "The windmill town". The only windmill in the Village now and still functioning is on the Oneck Lane property of Mrs. Edward Geer. Occasionally, wells and pumps in working order can be seen in some of the outlying districts.

The windmill was doomed, however, a little more than fifty years ago (1898) when several progressive businessmen organized a stock company known as the Quogue and Westhampton Water Company. It was at first headed by J. Post Howell as president, who was succeeded by Erastus Post, both of Quogue; and the positions of treasurer and secretary were filled, respectively, by Henry Gardiner of Quogue and Ernest H. Bishop of Westhampton Beach. A pumping station was built and a huge

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

tank erected in Quogue, slightly north of the Montauk Highway, and ever since the plant was completed Quogue and Westhampton have been provided with a plentiful water supply. Hydrants were placed at frequent intervals when the water mains were laid and these gave the first adequate fire protection the two villages had ever known. In 1924 the original company was sold to the South Bay Consolidated Water Company and, since that time, the office which the company has maintained in the Village has been under the able management of George Fox.

### *Merchants*

#### *Stores*

#### *Markets*

### *Trades*

In the days before the summer population contributed to the prosperity of the Village, local folks gleaned a living from their farms and the bountiful supply of seafoods obtainable from the nearby waters. The early settlers of Catchaponack lived much the same as other people in similar small hamlets and provided for themselves all the clothing and essentials for the home by their industrious use of the spinning wheel and loom, while the greater part of the food supply came from the land. Consequently, there was little need for stores and markets, especially as cash was scarce and bartering was the usual method of trade. Toward the close of the last century, when the Village began to develop along broader lines, the old industries and customs were gradually discarded with only a few exceptions. Fishing has and probably will always remain a small industry along the coast, but it is not depended upon for a source of income now as it was years ago.

The waters of the local bays improved to such an extent after the Moriches Inlet opened in 1931 that clamming has developed into a profitable occupation for the scores of people who

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

have engaged in the arduous work. Under certain conditions, such as unfavorable weather, the clam diggers frequently receive \$10. a bushel for their catches but otherwise three to six dollars is the usual price in the New York market.

Two commercial fishing boats of large size are owned by Edward G. Winters and Neil Poillion, who use the Yacht Basin for their home base. The catches of fish and skimogues taken by these deep sea fishermen are shipped to markets where the demand is greatest. The Shinnecock Inlet affords a passage to and from the ocean but tides and shifting sand make it hazardous to negotiate at times.

The history\* of duck raising for market on Long Island dates back to the early 1800's, but it did not become a full time industry in this section until around 1880. The commercial duck "ranches" are all located in the neighboring communities; however, the success of the industry has had a favorable effect economically upon the Village.

### *Stores and Markets*

The first step toward centralizing business came in 1860 when Stephen Fanning Griffing opened a general store in a part of his dwelling, which stood on Main Street near the site of the Main Street Apartment building. Mr. Griffing followed the custom of the times by driving a wagon stocked with dry goods and groceries to the outlying sections and selling his wares to the housewives who seldom had an opportunity to leave their homes. Meanwhile, Mrs. Griffing attended to the needs of the customers who went to the store. In the days when transportation was limited and the population scattered, merchandizing in this way was not only an advantage to isolated inhabitants but was profitable

\* See article in Bailey's History of Long Island by LeRoy Wilcox



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

for the tradesman. Many ambulant traders, who later became successful businessmen, began their careers by walking from door to door selling notions and yard goods from packs carried on their backs. The days when a "pack peddler" was a familiar sight along the highway have long since passed.

In 1880, twenty years after Mr. Griffing had pointed the way to a profitable enterprise, Charles Raynor and Ernest H. Bishop became partners in a general store, which was at first located in a small building\* owned by Mr. Raynor on Main Street near the corner of Beach Lane. Ten years later, the partnership was dissolved and Mr. Bishop built a larger building on the same site where he continued to conduct a store for the next decade. Mr. Bishop had become a well-established merchant by 1903 and found that the growth in population had increased his business to such an extent that larger quarters were required. A new and still larger store was built on the north side of Main Street and, at the same time, the old store was moved and attached at the rear for storage space. When Mr. Bishop retired in 1924 after forty-five years in active business, the property was sold to Wilfred Newins who discontinued the grocery department and since that time the Newins Department Store has specialized in dry goods and house furnishings.

Many changes have taken place in the business life of the Village through the years and it would be difficult, if interesting, to mention all the stores and markets which have come and gone. However, there are some merchants and business concerns of long standing which should not be overlooked while others, that have come in more recent years, have remained a sufficient length of time to be worthy of recognition.

\*The original store is now an out-building at the rear of the Moorland Hotel.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

An early grocery store, which served the public for many years but has gone out of existence now, was owned by Mr. and Mrs. D. Egbert Smith who came to the Village from Smithtown, L. I. around 1890. After residing here for a few years, Mr. Smith purchased the building directly east of the Main Street Apartments and opened a grocery business. The store was originally owned by George Jagger who had had it moved from the north side of South Country Road, near the present Goodman property, to the Village where he continued to sell ice cream until Mr. Smith bought the building.

In connection with the store Mrs. Smith ran a small restaurant, and the good home cooked food she provided was very acceptable to the community at the time when public eating places were few and far between.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith\* were a delightful couple of the "old school" and will long be remembered in the community where they lived so many years.

After the death of Mrs. Smith, the store was carried on for a short time by her son, D. Willard Smith, but in 1940 the business was discontinued.

Before butcher markets were common in every small village, local butchers sold meat from a wagon at the door of the customers, as was usual with other commodities. A number of people had attempted to establish a butcher shop with little success before Moses Weixelbaum bought the market from M. Hines & Company in 1902. Since that time, Mr. Weixelbaum has carried on a superior and successful market, which is now the oldest business in the Village still in the hands of the original owner.

Another record in point of time is held by Mr. and Mrs. James Seeley \*\*, who came to Westhampton Beach in 1901 and

\*Mr. Smith died in 1933, Mrs. Smith in 1938

\*\*Mr. Seeley died in February 1951 and Mrs. Seeley in November 1951

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

built a store on the north side of Main Street. Their business was devoted at first to a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, and it was the first market of its kind in the Village. Although the green grocery department has been discontinued, a large stock of toys and novelties, that has always been a part of the business, together with periodicals and smokers' supplies are still to be found a Seeley's. For some years prior to the death of her parents, Gloria Seeley has managed the business.

Shortly after the close of World War I, a trend toward modern merchandizing became apparent in the Village with the advent of the "chain store". Thos. Roulston, a Brooklyn concern, opened a grocery store in the Owen block on Main Street in 1921 and was soon followed by the Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company. Five years later, H. C. Bohack, also a Brooklyn firm, established a branch here. The A & P remained only about ten years and, when the company withdrew, the stock was purchased by Gelston Walter, of East Quogue, who is now the only independent grocer in town.

Early in the summer of 1950 all the Roulston stores in Suffolk County were closed or sold to the managers, and in June of that year the store in the Village went out of existence. Howard Firth, who had been the able manager for nearly thirty years, continues as a grocery merchant in Quogue.

Bohack's is unlike the other chain stores which have come to the Village, inasmuch as the property and building are owned by the company. A complete new super-market was built in 1949 adjoining the original store, on Main Street opposite the Post Office, and the first building was remodeled at the time for storage.

The Royal Scarlet grocery, a part of the Weixelbaum



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

Market, and a Krasdale store on Mill Road constitute the source of food supply in the Village at the present time.

Dry goods and clothing stores came along in the course of time, but it is difficult to say now when and by whom the first attempts in that line of business were made. William H. Winters, and later Frank Walters, conducted such stores for a few years in the Grimshaw and Redfield block, but it is quite possible that Henry Platt was the real pioneer in the field. Mr. Platt, who was a successful merchant here for many years, had made a humble beginning in the business world by selling from a pack in his early life. The Platt store was at first in the present Hampton Chronicle building but later, when increased business justified it, a new store was built which is now occupied by the Walter Grocery. When the Atlantic and Pacific Company rented the property, Mr. Platt moved his stock across the street but soon after sold the business to Herbert Schwartz, who has been the proprietor since 1928.

A dry goods store especially acceptable to the women of the community came in about 1914 when Swezey and Newins, a Patchogue firm, opened a branch in the west side of the Gould Block on Mill Road. The store carried a complete line of yard materials, notions and some women's apparel and was managed by Wilfred Newins, ably assisted by Charlotte Groves Winters. Ten years later, the branch became independent of the Patchogue concern and Wilfred Newins established the department store on Main Street in the building he had purchased from E. H. Bishop.

In comparatively recent years, women's apparel has been available throughout the year in two shops dealing exclusively in ready-to-wear clothes and accessories. Charles Zaloom was the first to open a store of the kind and for the past twenty-five years

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

the Orient Shop has been popular and successful. For some years previously, Mr. Zaloom had travelled about the community during the summer selling linens and so was well known in the Village when he settled here.

The corner dress shop in the Patio Building has changed hands several times in the last twenty years and until the past five years was open only in the summer. In the spring of this year (1951) Lola Jessup and Mary Kissane became partners in a shop called "The Cockle Shell," where a wide variety of dresses, accessories and gifts may be found.

The first and only jewelry store in the Village dates back to 1905 when Clarence F. Overton, a native of Patchogue, established his business in the Grimshaw and Redfield block. About twenty years ago, the store was moved to the Winters building on the opposite side of Main Street where Mr. Overton continues, holding one of the longest business records in the Village.

The first drug store which can be recalled now occupied a small space in the Weixelbaum building and was operated in the early 1880s by a man named Blackman. In about 1906 the business was purchased by Miss Dahl and her father, and soon afterward they moved into a more pretentious store where the Sheeley's Pharmacy is now located. Some years later Miss Dahl sold the drug business and property to George M. Perry, who modernized the store and made extensive alterations in the building. Although the store has had a soda fountain since Miss Dahl's day, Mr. Sheeley, who bought the property in 1943, has added a luncheonette, which is a popular feature.

The first attempt to establish a pharmacy in the Westhampton Theatre building, after it was completed in 1932, was not successful. However, in 1939 Morris Speed became the pro-

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

prietor and since then the business has flourished and Mr. Speed has taken a place among the successful merchants in the Village.

A stationery store carrying periodicals, school supplies and toys was opened by Max Schram and his daughters, Nettie and Hattie, in 1930. The store was at first located in the west end of the Village Apartment block, but ten years later was moved to the building formerly occupied by the Post Office. Mr. and Mrs. Myron Straw of Connecticut bought the business in 1947 and, since that time, have made many additions and improvements, which include a popular luncheonette.

The Eckart ice cream and confectionery store on Mill Road also serves a light lunch, and it was opened in about 1920 by Jacob Eckart. Because of Mr. Eckart's failing health his son, Warren, has been in charge of the business for several years.

The repeal of prohibition in 1932 and the revised laws regulating the sale of alcoholic beverages brought a new type of store to many places throughout the country. The "package store," where liquors are sold to be consumed elsewhere, is a great improvement over the old corner saloon which was a popular rendezvous for men for unknown ages. As soon as the law permitted, liquor stores were opened in the Village by Milton Weixelbaum on Main Street and by Nellie Eckart on the Montauk Highway. In 1946 Frank Bouvet of Port Jefferson became proprietor of a similar store on Mill Road.

Back in the early days when all the family needs were taken care of in the home, the luxury of a barber shop was unknown to the local people. However, changes were taking place rapidly in the latter part of the last century, and in about 1880 a visiting barber began coming over from Riverhead on Saturday afternoons and setting up shop on the second floor of E. H.



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Bishop's general store. The male population soon developed a taste for professional services and patronage was assured when in 1912 Hugo and Max Schram began a business in the Weixelbaum block, where the latter continued as a barber until 1930.

Meanwhile Dominic Del Ben came to the Village in 1915 and opened a barber shop in the building which he had built just west of the Parlato Motor Corporation. Sixteen years later, Mr. Del Ben moved the shop to Sunset Avenue and has since continued in that location.

At present, tonsorial services are available at two other shops, one in the Winters building on Main Street and another located in the Hajek block on Mill Road.

The country women living two or three generations ago attended to their hairdressing at home and probably would not have looked with favor on the "beauty shops" which are considered a necessity in this age. It was not until about 1910 that the first professional hairdresser made an appearance in the Village and then only remained during the summer season. It was the custom at that time for the operator to call at the home of the client to do the necessary work, which usually consisted of a shampoo and perhaps a manicure. Through the years the women have also become conscious of the advantages of professional hairdressing and, as a result, there are now four year 'round beauty culture establishments in town. Included on the present list there are: Ria Del Ben, Sunset Avenue; Miss Helen in the Gould block on Mill Road; Florence Pruesse in the Patio Building and Mary Vito on Sunset Avenue, and all have a substantial clientele.

### *Blacksmiths, Wheelwrights, Garages*

Gradually, over a period of years, many new business enterprises have made an appearance in the Village and, just as

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gradually, some of the older occupations have completely vanished. The old and honorable trades of blacksmith and wheelwright fall into the latter category, chiefly for the obvious reason that horses and wagons have been replaced almost entirely by motorized vehicles. However, the place held by the blacksmith in the early way of life was an important one, for his labours produced all the farm implements, household utensils, hardware and nails used in colonial days. Quite often these craftsmen forged grill work, gates, fire dogs, etc. of great artistic beauty and these articles, together with the more humble ones, are highly prized today by individual owners and museums.

John Young was the first blacksmith to locate in the Village, and his shop was on Main Street slightly west of the Parlato garage. Mr. Young had been in business at Westhampton for several years before he moved his house and shop to "the Center" in 1888. At the same time, Frank F. Halsey had a shop on the floor above the blacksmith shop, where he carried on his trade as wheelwright. In later years Mr. Halsey combined bicycle repairing with his other work.

The last evidence of the trades, so important in the early life of the community, disappeared in 1942 when the blacksmith and wheelwright shop, established by the late Ward Havens in 1901, was closed. Following the death of Mr. Havens in 1935, his son, Howard, continued in the shop for a few years but the demand for hand-wrought iron work and the lack of horses to be shod made the business no longer profitable. The Havens shop stood on Main Street between the Sheeley and Zaloom properties. Six years ago (1948) the old landmark was sold and moved to Glovers Lane where it was converted into a bungalow.

### *Garages*

This familiar word, garage, comes from the French lan-

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guage and the literal meaning is: to cover or protect. The word came into common use with the English-speaking people at about the time motorized vehicles replaced the horse and the other beasts of burden.

The first garage in the Village was the outgrowth of a small bicycle repair shop that had been started by Charles Wooster in 1895. The shop occupied the ground floor of a frame building, which stood at that time on Main Street where the Parlato Motor Corporation is now located. Within a very few years Mr. Wooster realized a need and so expanded his business to include automobile repairing and a sales department for accessories. In 1917 Michael J. Parlato, who had been employed at the garage for a few years, purchased the business and property from Mr. Wooster. Ten years later when larger quarters became necessary, Mr. Parlato made a drastic change. The original building was moved to the south end of the property, where it was remodeled into a dwelling for the Parlato family, and a new modern fire-proof building was erected on the Main Street site. The new structure not only provided adequate space for work shop, storage, display room and offices but also added considerably to the appearance of the Village.

There was no doubt that the automobile "had come to stay" in 1907 when William Slattery came from Brooklyn and established a garage on Mill Road. At first, his shop was housed in the old building next to Eckart's store. Mr. Slattery was most progressive in his field and, being an able mechanic, brought with him a complete standard machine shop, making it possible for him not only to repair motors but to make and replace necessary parts. This service was a great boon to the motorist of that period when cars were frequently in need of repair and spare parts not readily acquired. At the time Mr. Slattery set up his



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

machine shop here, it was the only one of its kind east of Sayville, L. I. Three years after Mr. Slattery came to Westhampton Beach, he built a garage at Six Corners where he continued in business until he retired in 1949 and sold the garage to George Eckart.

Shortly after Clifford and Norman Raynor were released from the Armed Forces following World War I, the Raynor's garage on Library Avenue was founded by them in 1919. Since that time, a successful business has been established, both in repair work and for the sale of Plymouth and Dodge cars.

Two other garages came into existence considerably later. Jessup and Stevens, on the corner of Mill Road and Sunset Avenue was founded for repair work in 1934 by Aubrey Jessup and Thomas Stevens, Jr. Ike Milouski, who does general repairs and body work, began operation in a shop on Riverhad Road in 1949.

### *Local Newspapers*

A sign post pointing toward the growth and progress of the Village was evident in 1906 when the Hampton Chronicle, a weekly newspaper, was founded by the late John L. King\*. The Chronicle office and printing shop were located at first in the extreme east part of the Grimshaw and Redfield block, where it remained until about 1930 when the plant was moved to the present site on the south side of Main Street. During Mr. King's business career, he suffered three major tragedies, two of which were directly the result of the 1938 hurricane. The most unbearable of these was the death of Mrs. King, who was drowned in an effort to escape from their beach home. At the same time, the plant was completely inundated, seriously damaging the presses and destroying all the files, which was an irreplaceable loss. How-

\* Mr. King, who was a native of Bridgehampton, died in 1949

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ever, the business was carried on through those trying times and only one issue of the Chronicle failed to appear. In December of the same year, a fire swept through the building, taking further toll from a business that had barely recovered from the setback it had suffered a few months previously. Nine years later (1947) the Chronicle was sold to Derick Betts, who continues to publish the local paper which has, during the years, become an institution in Village life.

For about ten years between 1918 and 1928 Westhampton Beach had another weekly paper called "The Westhampton Press". Fred Miller, who came from central New York State, had been employed by the Chronicle for a time before he became editor and publisher of the Press. Following Mr. Miller's death in 1928, the paper was published for a year or two by his sons but it finally was discontinued and the plant was devoted to job printing. Three years later, the latter was also discontinued.

### *Seaside Bank*

Another important development in the economic history of the Village came in 1904 when the Seaside Bank was founded by a group of prominent business men from Quogue and Westhampton Beach. On April 25, 1904 the Bank was chartered under the banking laws of New York State and thirty years later joined the Federal Reserve System. The small frame building, that was built to house the Bank at first, has been the local office of the South Bay Consolidated Water Company since 1925.

At the end of the first twenty-year period, the Bank had become a firmly established institution in the community, and the increasing volume of business called for a more adequate building. As a result, the new and modern banking house was erected in 1924 on the corner of Main Street and Mill Road—the original site of the Westhampton Free Chapel.

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It is noteworthy that there have been comparatively few changes in the Bank officers since it was founded almost fifty years ago. Erastus Post of Quogue was the first president and upon his resignation in 1932, Ernest H. Bishop was elected to the position and continued ably until he died in January, 1951. Edward H. Rogers, Sr., who had been vice-president for several years, was then elevated to the presidency. Harmon D. Bishop was the first cashier and Joseph T. Stevens, who was the first assistant, succeeded Mr. Bishop when he resigned in 1930. Following the death of Mr. Stevens in 1949, Albert Link was appointed cashier, having served as assistant cashier for twenty years previously.

### *Motion Pictures*

It was round about 1927 that the first theatre, designed expressly for showing motion pictures, was built by Harry Nugent at Six Corners. Prior to that time, the Village residents who wished to enjoy that popular form of entertainment were obliged to drive to one of the larger nearby towns.

Unfortunately, the Hampton Star Theatre was seriously damaged by fire early in 1932 but, after several years of patient and diligent effort, Mr. Nugent restored the building and the theatre was reopened in 1947.

In 1951 Mr. Nugent leased the building to a group of people who conducted the first summer theatre in this community.

Four years after Mr. Nugent first entered the theatre business, the Heelbap Corporation built the Westhampton Theatre on Main Street near the corner of Sunset Avenue. From the time of completion until the present, it has been leased to the



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Prudential Company, a syndicate which operates several other motion picture houses on Long Island.

The Westhampton Theatre was formally opened in June, 1932 and special entertainment was provided to make it a noteworthy occasion. Besides some well-known stage talent from New York, the address by the late Gov. Alfred E. Smith contributed the highlight to the gala affair.

The history of the motion picture industry is a long one and since 1853, when experiments were first made in the field, miracles have been accomplished. It was in 1887 that Thomas Edison undertook a solution of the problem and in 1894 the motion picture, somewhat as it is known today, emerged from his laboratory. Through the years the silent pictures improved gradually, but a real feat in electrical science did not take place until 1928, when sound with pictures revolutionized the entire industry. Many years were devoted to the study of a process to produce motion pictures in natural color and the resulting technicolor films that were introduced in 1935 denote another great scientific accomplishment.

### *Funeral Directors*

In more than name, perhaps, the funeral director and mortician of the present time have replaced the old-fashioned undertaker in a business that has in recent years become a professional occupation.

Funeral arrangements had been simple affairs prior to 1860 when Lewis Tuttle of Westhampton became the first undertaker in the vicinity, and with an old horse-drawn hearse was prepared to officiate whenever the occasion demanded.

The circumstances under which Mr. Tuttle added this side line to his regular business is typical of the era when men

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

were free to enter any field of occupation without the necessity of special education, licenses and permits. A wheelwright by trade, he had been given an order to build a new hearse for a customer in Moriches. Through the transaction he received a similar but antiquated vehicle in part payment. With this useful piece of equipment at hand he decided to utilize his assets and, in so doing, established the business which has endured for many decades.

After the death of Mr. Tuttle, his son-in-law, William Otterbridge, continued to be the local undertaker until 1914 when he left Westhampton to make his home in Bermuda.

The neighborhood was not left without a funeral director, however, for in the same year Everett J. Brockett came from central New York State and purchased the business and equipment from Mr. Otterbridge. Mr. Brockett bought a home in Westhampton and from that location conducted the business until he retired in 1938. The horsedrawn hearse remained in use for several years after Mr. Brockett came and it was the custom to procure a team from a nearby farmer whenever the hearse was required for a funeral. This arrangement was not always satisfactory, so in 1918 Mr. Brockett purchased a motor hearse which was the first one in this community. Undoubtedly, this change would have taken place sooner if World War I had not interfered with normal progress.

Some years before Mr. Brockett retired his son, Everett, had become a well established funeral director in Southampton. With a desire to continue the original business which was more than half a century old, the junior Mr. Brockett bought the property on Mill Road formerly owned by Dr. Rodney Wyman and, after renovations were completed in the house, the Brockett

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Funeral Home was opened under the direction of a resident manager.

Eugene McFarland had gained two years experience with a firm of morticians in New York before he returned to the Village in 1943 to settle permanently. At first, Mr. McFarland directed his work from his father's home on Sunset Avenue, but in 1945 he bought a small house and a part of the Overton farm on Mill Road. It was necessary to make extensive alterations and additions to the original building and, since completed, the McFarland Funeral Chapel has added greatly to the appearance of the locality.

John M. Bishop was the first funeral director to take up the occupation within the Village. In the early 1930s Mr. Bishop established a mortuary at the Bishop homestead on Montauk Highway from where he continues to carry on his work.

The care and burial of the dead in colonial days was undoubtedly carried out in a simple manner, but references made to the matter in the Town Records usually concern paupers and little detail is given. The prominence of the person being laid to rest probably influenced the procedure to some extent, but in all cases the customs were more or less the same. It was usual for the housewife to take care of the "layout out" while one of the men was called upon to build a crude coffin from pine boards. The Town Records reveal that rum\* often played an important part in connection with a burial. It must be remembered, however, that in the early times the settlers had little to stimulate the body or the drooping spirits, sugar, coffee and tea being scarce and beyond the reach of all except the most affluent.

\* Southampton Town Records Vol. 5 Pages 164 169



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

### *Real Estate and Insurance*

Looking back through the first Southampton Town Records, one finds that the division and distribution of lands were of prime importance with the Townsmen. Around the year 1660, as the colony became firmly established, acquiring and exchanging real estate took a major place in the economic life of the colonists. Good agricultural land and grazing meadows were valuable assets to the settlers and during a long period of local history a man's affluence was based largely upon the amount of property he owned. As conditions changed through the years and taxes increased, some of the descendants of the large property owners frequently found themselves "land poor". The soil along the coast is usually good but inland the many acres of sandy soil covered with scrub oak and pine had no value and, even today, little use has been made of such property.

Sixty years ago, as the Village began to develop into a flourishing summer resort, real estate kept pace with the changing times and values increased considerably. In the same era, agriculture gradually lost importance; and, as the local people found new occupations, the once prosperous farm lands were sold to make way for summer homes and hotels.

Shortly before the turn of the century, insurance became one of the newer local business enterprises, but at first offered only coverage on buildings against loss and damage by fire. Prior to that time people generally did not feel the importance of carrying insurance, although some few did take advantage of the service as indicated by a policy\* issued to a local resident in 1861.

In the early years, insurance companies could not always be depended upon but, after legislation was passed governing the practices of the business, it became reliable and popular. Even-

\* This policy is in the files of George E. Winters

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tually, insurance was expanded and nowadays policies are written to cover almost any contingency that may arise in modern living. The nature of the insurance business makes it well adapted to real estate; consequently, both are usually handled in the same office.

Harmon D. Bishop in 1885 established the first insurance agency in the Village with an office in his home on Montauk Highway. A few years later, Charles E. Raynor followed in the same field but sold his business in 1909 to William H. Winters.

Real estate had been given little attention as a formal occupation until the latter part of the 1890s when Ernest H. Bishop realized the opportunities and opened an office in his store. Mr. Bishop was most progressive and the small booklet listing the properties for rent and sale, that he published in 1901, was the forerunner of similar booklets in use since that time.

By 1909 William H. Winters had an insurance agency well established with an office in the small building that once stood on Main Street between the Main Street Apartments and the Smith property. A year or two later Mr. Winters added real estate brokerage to his other activities and in 1912 moved his office to the new building that he had built on the south side of Main Street. His brother, George E. Winters, has long been associated with the business and soon after World War II William H. Winters, Jr., became a member of the firm.

The real estate and insurance division of E. Raynor & Sons, long established building contractors, was founded in 1923 and, since that date, Emerson Raynor has been the able manager.

The Heelbarp Corporation was organized in 1926 for the purpose of developing and selling property on a rather large scale. E. H. Rogers, Sr., who had been active in real estate for a

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

number of years previously, was the president of the new corporation. The other founders and directors were: L. E. Pierson, E. H. Bishop, A. J. Hallock of Speonk and E. O. Fordham of Westhampton.

The construction of the Patio Building, the Westhampton Theatre and the adjoining drug store were projects undertaken by the Heelbarp Corporation, and all have proved to be important additions to the Village. The corporation also built several large houses for summer rental on the beach and at Speonk Shore, but all in the former group were destroyed in the 1938 storm.

Elsie Arnold and William T. Hulse were partners in a real estate and insurance agency for a short period in the late 1920s and maintained an office in the same building which had been occupied much earlier by William H. Winters. Following the death of Mr. Hulse in 1930, the insurance interests were sold but Miss Arnold continued active in real estate until 1934. The Heelbarp Corporation was the purchaser of the insurance business and, as a result, the Westhampton Agency came into being in 1931. Since 1946 Edward H. Rogers, Jr., has been the manager.

The Prescott Agency was established by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Prescott in 1935 and two years later opened a real estate and insurance office on Mill Road.

On the list of merchants, tradesmen and contractors, whose business has grown and developed to meet the needs of the Village are N. B. Rogers and Son, dealers in coal, lumber and building materials since 1879, when the firm was founded by N. Byron Rogers. The senior Mr. Rogers was succeeded by his son, Alanson P. Rogers, and now the business is conducted by Alanson N. Rogers, grandson of the founder.



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E. Raynor and Sons has a long business record that dates back to the latter part of the last century and is the oldest building firm in existence at the present time. The start was made many years ago when Elijah P. Raynor, Bryon Rogers and Charles Bishop worked together as carpenters but not in formal partnership. Later on when Mr. Rogers and Mr. Bishop found other occupations, Mr. Raynor organized a company (probably about 1880) with his sons, Mitchell and Augustus Raynor, as partners. The latter continued for years after the death of their father, and at this time the contracting and building division of the concern is in the hands of a member of the third generation, J. Madison Raynor.

Gould and Rogers entered a building contracting partnership in 1906 and for the following twenty years held a prominent place in that field. When the partnership was terminated in 1925, Frank L. Gould, a native of Rhode Island, continued to operate the hardware store, which was a part of the business, and Edward H. Rogers, Sr. devoted his time entirely to real estate. After the death of Mr. Gould in 1942, his grandson, Frank Gould, became the proprietor of the store. The Gould Building on Mill Road was built by Messrs. Gould and Rogers in 1914.

William Grimshaw and Charles Redfield combined their skills and abilities to establish a plumbing business in 1897 with headquarters in the building on Main Street which Mr. Grimshaw had built a few years previously. The business grew rapidly and eventually came to include heat contracting, tin work and a well-stocked hardware store. About 1922 the partnership was dissolved and Mr. Redfield's place in the firm was taken by Fred Palmer, Mr. Grimshaw's son-in-law. After this change, plumbing and heating were discontinued and the improved and enlarged hardware store has since been under the name of Grimshaw and

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

Palmer. Following the death of Mr. Palmer in 1934, the business has been successfully managed by Mrs. Madalyne Grimshaw (Palmer) Nevins. In 1942 the hardware store was moved from the original location and since has occupied a building on the opposite side of Main Street.

The plumbing and heating firm now owned by Henry Drew and Anton Ehlers has been in existence for a long time, although several changes in name and ownership have taken place during the years.

The business was started in 1907 by Benjamin C. Owen, and at that time the workshop and office were in the house on Mill Road now owned by Mrs. Liedtke. Five years later, Mr. Owen exchanged his property on Mill Road for a site on Main Street, owned by the late Gustav H. Liedtke, and moved his business to a small building where Mr. Liedtke had previously conducted a butcher shop. A short time later, Mr. Owen removed the small shop and built a block of stores on the same location, where he continued his work until 1916. The business was sold at that time to Stewart P. Howell and Louis Autier but, after their partnership was terminated in about 1929, the name of the firm was changed to Autier and Drew. After Mr. Autier retired, his place was taken by Anton Ehlers and the firm is now known as Drew and Ehlers.

George McKnight came to the Village from New York in 1909 and for several years was associated in the plumbing business with Grimshaw and Redfield. In 1926 Mr. McKnight severed his connection with that firm and, ever since, has been an independent contractor engaged in plumbing and heating work.

The Overton Electric Company holds a place of long standing on the list of newer enterprises, which have developed

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to meet the need of a growing community. This company has a main office in Riverhead, and in 1910 had a contract to install part of the power lines that first brought electric current across the "plains" to Westhampton Beach. Quite naturally, the opportunity for an electrical contractor was open after that and very soon the firm of Overton and Tuttle was established with the late Frank Tuttle as partner and local representative. In 1926 the Overton Company bought Mr. Tuttle's share of the business and eventually opened an office, display room and shop in the Gould Building on Mill Road.

The Guldi Electric Shop, which is a branch of A. Guldi and Sons of Southampton, was started here in 1945. Walter Guldi, the manager, does electrical contracting besides conducting a store well stocked with all sorts of electrical equipment.

Willett E. Rogers is another electrical contractor, who has been in business since 1946 with an office and shop at his home on Depot Road.



### III

## POPULATION HISTORY

*Summer Homes      Hotels      Beach Resorts*  
*Famous Personalities      The Professions*

Progress usually comes slowly in a community but, after the Montauk Division of the Long Island Railroad was completed in 1879, the character and economic life of the Village began to show a radical change. Undoubtedly, the railroad and later the added facilities for travel, communication and public services played an important part in transforming the quiet hamlet of Catchaponack into a thriving summer resort. Originally, the railroad was organized with the idea of carrying passengers and freight to Montauk and then, via ferry, across the Sound to Boston, but that scheme was not successful and only lasted a short time. In the meanwhile, the possibilities at the eastern end of the Island were discovered and with the definite sign of growth apparent, the railroad soon found a new and unexpected source of revenue.

Until comparatively recent years, no attention was given to recording the population of the individual village and hamlets, making it quite impossible to give any accurate figures concerning the number of inhabitants in Catchaponack for a long period after it was settled. However, it is quite certain that any change during the first hundred and fifty years was negligible. The first census of population with any reference to this community was found in some old books dated 1868, that are on file

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at the County Clerk's office in Riverhead. The population at that time, according to these records, was about 400 persons. Apparently little, if any, progress was made during the next decade, as the census record of 1880 supplied by the New York State Library accounts for only 439 inhabitants. Both of the above figures include Westhampton, as well as Catchaponack; consequently, little can be determined regarding the number of residents in the Village until a much later date.

"The Gazeteer of New York State" in 1860 refers to "Ketchabonec" as a hamlet but no mention is made of population, probably because it was too small and unimportant for consideration.

Now and for some years past, more careful records of the census of population have been made; therefore, more accurate figures are available. In 1930 there were 994 persons residing permanently within the Village limits, and by 1950 the number had increased to 1095\*. It is difficult to estimate the population during the peak of the summer season, but the number probably reaches well over three thousand.

The crowded conditions in the urban and suburban areas have caused many people to seek homes in more quiet and peaceful country neighborhoods. The influence of this desire for country living has been felt in Westhampton Beach, and since 1940 a substantial increase in population has taken place, due to the numerous families who have chosen to make their permanent homes here. Many of the "new all year" residents have been property owners in the Village for years and were formerly members of the summer colony.

From time to time the population has been increased by people who have come to the community for business reasons,

\* Figure given by the Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D. C.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

but usually their stay is only temporary. This is true of the two- or three-year period when the American-Arabian Oil Company maintained a training school at the Air Base on Riverhead Road, and the staff with their families found homes in and near the Village. In June, 1951 the Oil Company moved to a new location and the Army Air Corps resumed operations at the base, where a permanent training centre for jet pilots will soon be in full swing. Quite naturally, this has brought a great influx to the Village and at present all available housing space is taken, but at best the Army personnel is never stationed long in any one place.

The eastern end of Long Island has always had a certain Negro population since colonial days, when landowners held slaves to work the land and care for the livestock. James Truslow Adams in his history of the Town of Southampton has this to say about slavery: "Negro slavery was likewise practiced early and there were also free Negroes here by 1659. Black slaves seem to have become fairly numerous later as shown by the number of manumissions recorded about the beginning of the 19th century after the passage of the act of 1788 providing for their freeing, but the subject presents no unusual features."

Westhampton Beach lost its last citizen born in slavery when John Smith died about 1914 at an advanced age.

Undoubtedly, some slaves were held by the first settlers in the Village, but the practice seems to have been abandoned before any one now living can remember. At present, the Negro families residing here originally came from Virginia and the Carolinas; at first, for seasonal work and later remaining to make permanent homes but their number has never been large.

Toward the close of the last century a mild migration of Central Europeans found their way into the community. The



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"Polish" as they are called regardless of origin, comprise the largest "foreign" element in the Village, but new arrivals from abroad have not increased the number in years except for a few displaced persons, who have been brought in since World War II. A sprinkling of other Europeans live in the neighborhood but there is not a sufficient number from any one country to make a predominate group.

### *Summer Homes*

It has been pointed out that drastic changes were taking place in the Village toward the close of the last century, but one important factor, which has had a great influence in bringing about the different condition prevailing today, must not be overlooked. Geographically, Westhampton Beach has an ideal location for a summer resort, it being the first town in Suffolk County, after leaving New York, which has direct access to the ocean. This feature has been a decided advantage in attracting visitors, who wish to spend the summer and enjoy the many recreational opportunities offered by a village so situated. Growth and development have resulted in the last sixty years, which surpasses by many fold all the progress made in the first two hundred years of the Village's existence.

The summer home built by General John A. Dix in 1879 undoubtedly gave impetus to an idea and gradually, as an increasing number of people began to appreciate the pleasant surroundings in the Village, the summer colony grew; slowly at first but gaining rapidly in a surprisingly short time. Usually the newcomers rented cottages for a year or two or lived at one of the boarding houses until convinced by their stay that they had found a delightful spot, they subsequently built their own homes. Real estate took on new values when the lands formerly used for farming were sold for building sites, and as development pro-

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

gressed the quiet country lanes were transformed into attractive residential streets. Among the first members of the summer colony are found the familiar names of Delafield, Cutter, Ward and Atwater and, while the natural course of events has brought changes, the same families are now represented in the Village by later generations.

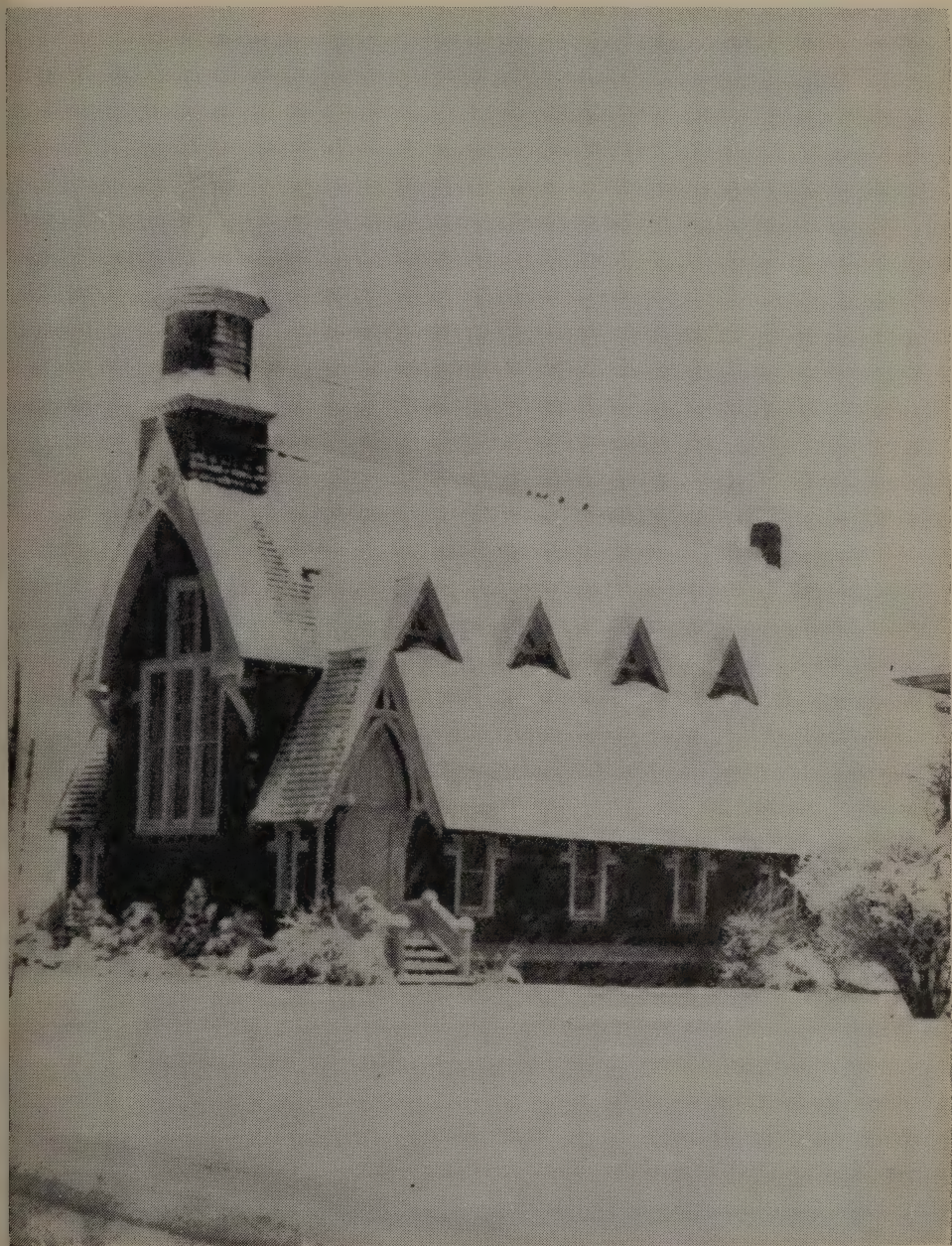
Through the years many local residents have found it profitable to rent their homes for summer occupancy and, as the demand has increased, many houses have been built for the sole purpose of summer rental. There is a wide range in price for houses by the season, which varies from \$300. for a small one to \$4000. or \$5000. for one more spacious and desirably located.

The popularity of ocean front property did not begin to any extent until about the turn of the century, although there were a few small "tea houses" for day use on the beach prior to that time. In 1900 Frank C. Rogers built the first house suitable for summer living on the dunes, and it was located just east of his bathing beach. However, the real pioneers in beach dwelling were the Robert White and Charles Thurston\* families, who built small cottages in about 1910, slightly west of Pond Point. At that time, there was no approach by road so it was necessary, after arriving by train, to sail across the bay to reach the cottages. Other names which come to mind and are associated with the first beach home owners are: Small, Dickenson, Hammond, Smart, Bigelow, Crampton and Gear, but none of these original owners are to be found along the dunes at present.

The construction of the Dune Road has had a lasting and important influence upon the development and value of beach

\* The Robert White house was *swept away* in 1938, but the Thurston house still remains. It was occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Brook (Ruth Thurston) until it was sold in 1950

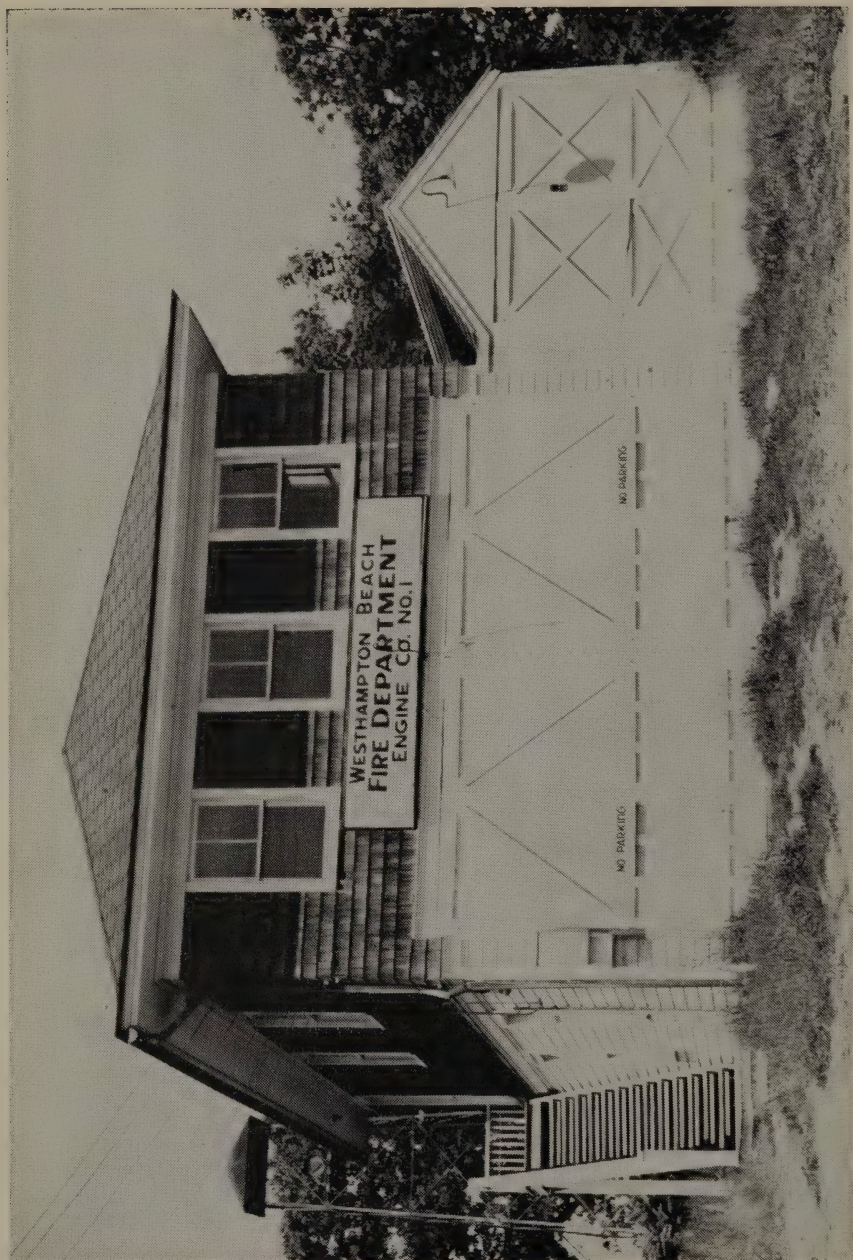




WESTHAMPTON FREE CHAPEL

Photo by George E. Winters 1930





FIREHOUSE, WESTHAMPTON BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT, GLOVER'S LANE

Photo 1946

## POPULATION HISTORY

property. Shortly after sections of the road were completed, considerable activity began in building on both the ocean and bay fronts. For some years prior to the 1938 hurricane a row of fine residences lined the beach from the Quogue line to Gunning Point. The colony known as Buena Vista, which was developed by the late Charles Redfield in 1915, was completely wiped out and only five or six houses remained after the storm in the area between the Beach Lane Bridge and the Moriches Inlet. It is estimated that nearly a hundred cottages were either wrecked or demolished at the time.

The Village suffered a severe set back as a result of the famous "blow" and this, coupled with the previous ten years of depression, had a serious effect upon the economic life of the people. Small progress had been made toward recovery when all signs pointed to a second World War; consequently, readjustments came slowly. Building was not resumed to any extent until materials were again available after the conclusion of the war. Since that time, rebuilding on the dunes has gone forward rapidly but the type of inexpensively constructed cottages, which have "sprung up", has changed the character of the beach colony. Some attractive residences have been built on the ocean front in recent years, but none are as spacious or elaborate as those of pre-hurricane days.

It must not be assumed that all the building in the past and present has been confined to the beach. A great increase in the number of houses on the mainland in the Village has taken place since 1920 and, in many cases, both the summer and local residents have taken advantage of building sites on the new streets, which have been opened since that time.



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

### *Hotels and Boarding Houses*

The summer visitors who first ventured out to Catchaponack found life still simple and primitive, and the only accommodations to be had at the time were in the homes of the local residents. With each season the number of visitors increased and the greater demand for lodging made evident the need of boarding places. This need was pointed out at an early date by P. T. Barnum during the seasons when he was a guest at the Howell homestead. Mr. Barnum, who was a man of vision, influenced Mortimer Howell to build the original Howell House and substantiated his faith in the growing Village by contributing financial support to the venture. The Howell House was completed in 1868 and, for the following thirty-three years, was managed by Mr. and Mrs. Howell. In 1901 Mr. Howell retired from active business and for the next twenty-five years, with the exception of three when it was leased to Stephen F. Griffing, Sr., the hotel was under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Howell and later, Mr. and Mrs. D. P. Cobb (Gertrude Howell). Just prior to the death of Mr. Howell in 1906, the hotel was completely remodeled and a large new wing was built. Mr. and Mrs. Cobb added to the facilities by building the Howell House Club in 1922, and this annex remained open through the winter for a number of years.

In 1926 the hotel and annex were sold to Emmett E. Boone, who with the assistance of Mrs. Boone, made extensive improvements which included the "Sail Loft" and Captain's Cabin". After Mr. Boone became the proprietor of a hotel elsewhere in 1940, the Howell House was managed for the next four years by his son, Emmett E. Boone, Jr. The property was sold in 1944 and the purchasers were Mr. and Mrs. George Carmany, who have since conducted the old hotel in the traditional manner.



## POPULATION HISTORY

It is a point of interest to note that in spite of wars, depressions, hurricanes, etc., the Howell House has not been closed for a season since it was opened, which makes it the oldest hotel and the oldest business in the Village today.

The same year that Mr. Howell ventured into the hotel business, Edwin Halsey built in 1867 the Oneck House, which was on the north east corner of Oneck Lane and Oneck Road. The large frame building accommodated its share of summer guests until 1903, after which it was unoccupied for several years and during that time fell into a sad state of dilapidation. The property was purchased in 1929 by L. E. Pierson and soon afterwards the old, yellow building was torn down.

Another boarding place of about the same era as the two just mentioned was the Ketchaboneck House, built on Beach Lane by Frank C. Raynor. Some years later (about 1892) the building was destroyed by fire. Through the years following, the property changed ownership several times, but eventually the site was sold to C. B. Smith, who in 1905 built the large and then modern Moorland Hotel. After Mr. Smith's death, the property again fell into the hands of several different owners until 1940 when Mr. and Mrs. Philip Holbrook purchased the property. For the past five seasons, Mrs. Holbrook's son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Alson Van Vleck, have been managers of the Moorland.

Nathan C. Jessup decided in 1887 to try his hand in the business which had been proving more lucrative each year. Mr. Jessup took advantage of the opportunity to buy the old Presbyterian Church, which was being replaced by a new building, and had it moved to a site on Potunk Lane and Main Street, at about the place where the Country Club now stands. With some additions and alterations the Jessup House resulted, where Mr. Jessup

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

was host to summer guests each season until shortly before his death. Soon after the property was purchased in 1912 by the West Bay Company, the Jessup House was sold to Charles Redfield, who divided it and moved one section to School Lane and the other to Potunk Lane. The Potunk Lane portion was converted into a small boarding house, and during the following years it had several changes in ownership and management until 1946 when John Trages became the owner. The School Lane section was intended for an apartment house, but it was so poorly arranged that it was not successful and now stands in a deplorable condition.

The era when the small family boarding house was an institution in the Village has long since passed. It is difficult to visualize in this age how even a small number of guests could be comfortably taken care of when lamps were the only illumination and plumbing was almost unheard of. Two boarding houses, which have gone out of existence long ago, were the Griffing House owned by Charles Griffing and the Atlantic House owned by George H. Rogers, both on east Main Street.

The Grassmere on Beach Lane cannot be classed with the early boarding houses, although it has been in existence for many years. Originally it was the residence of Jehiel Corwin but for a long period was leased by C. B. Smith, who conducted a boarding house there before the Moorland was built. Later the property was purchased by Miss Harriet Raynor and she continued as hostess until the time of her death in about 1920. Two years later the Grassmere was sold to Mrs. A. E. Nichols, who has since made many improvements and conducts a select and popular boarding place, which is open throughout the year.

By 1903 Westhampton Beach had taken a place of importance among the fashionable resorts on the eastern end of the

## POPULATION HISTORY

Island and a promising future seemed well assured. It was in 1903 that Stephen F. Griffing, Sr., built the Hampton Inn, and the new hotel far surpassed in size and elegance any in the Village up to that time. With a background of many years experience in the hotel business, Mr. Griffing's reputation as a genial host soon made the Inn popular with the visitors who came for a summer sojourn. The Inn was sold in 1939 to Mr. and Mrs. William McKenzie and Mr. Griffing then retired after more than forty years in hotel work. Mr. McKenzie only lived a short time, and since his death Mrs. McKenzie has ably continued the management.

The need for a hotel on the dunes had been discussed locally for years, but it was not until 1939 that the need was fulfilled. Charles Bauscher salvaged what the hurricane had left of two houses belonging to his family and, with them as a nucleus, built the "Dune Deck". The venture proved a decided success from the start and the first beach hotel was popular with the resident guests as well as others from the Village, who enjoyed going there to dine in the pleasant surroundings overlooking the ocean. Following Mr. Bauscher's untimely death in 1947, the Dune Deck was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Hy Chesler who have made many improvements, including a second dining-room with a wide view of the beach and ocean.

A year after (1941) the Dune Deck was opened, Keith Morgan remodeled a former summer home, converting it into another beach hotel. "The Yardarm" is just west of the Jessup Lane Bridge and, although it is not large as summer hotels go, it enjoys an exclusive patronage by distinguished guests.

Many vacationists, who do not wish to be hampered by routine meal hours, find the two lodging houses in the Village the answer to their freedom. The Versailles on the corner of



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

Beach Lane and Main Street and the Hampton Manor on Potunk Lane are both first class rooming houses, and the proprietors are respectively: Samuel Marini and John Trages.

The Patio Hotel, which has been serving the public since the Heelbarp Building was completed in 1931, is the first year-round hotel to endure for any length of time in the Village. Mr. and Mrs. Warren Lewis, who were both lost in the 1938 hurricane, were the first to lease and manage the hotel, restaurant and later the bar after the repeal of prohibition in 1932. For the past ten years the Patio has been leased to a corporation composed of local business men, who have employed competent managers to direct the operation of the hotel. Through the efforts of the various managers, the Patio has become successful and is a decided asset to the Village.

The increase in the permanent population presented some housing problems, but the need for additional living quarters was met, in a measure, when William C. Atwater, Jr., purchased the Grimshaw and Palmer building and converted it into the Main Street Apartments. An extensive renovating job was necessary to modernize the building and divide it into the seven comfortable apartments that resulted. The value of this type of housing has been made apparent by the fact that all the apartments have been occupied since the alterations were finished in 1944.

A similar undertaking, on a smaller scale, was accomplished by John Meinik of Speonk, who converted the building on Brook Road, formerly used as a bakery, into four apartments and at the same time greatly improved the exterior appearance of the property.

### *Beach Resorts*

The history of the local beach resorts coincides more or less with other developments which started to take place in

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Catchaponack soon after summer visitors began to find their way to the quiet little village. Facts and dates relating to the early bathing beaches are hazy now, but it is quite probable that William and Beulah Raynor were the first to enter that field of endeavour. In 1870 Mr. and Mrs. Raynor started a bathing station (as it was called then) with a few, crude bath houses on the ocean front at the foot of Beach Lane. Ten years later the Raynors sold their holdings to Frank C. Rogers and Frank Melville and, since that time, the records are more accurate. Mr. Rogers and Mr. Melville, who later became a well-known shoe merchant and a prominent resident of Setauket, L. I., worked together for a few seasons, after which Mr. Melville found other employment but Mr. Rogers remained proprietor of the resort until his death in 1922.

For a good many years Rogers Bathing Beach was the only resort of the kind within easy walking distance from the Village, and it was enjoyed by both the summer and local residents. In the early days, Mr. Rogers ferried boarders from the Oneck House to the beach each morning in his sailboat and then doubled as life guard during the bathing hours. Besides that, he found time to maintain order on the premises, and there are still some oldsters who tell with affection of the discipline received when a child at the hands of "Pop" Rogers.

After the death of Mr. Rogers, his son, Demarest, took charge of the business and carried on until 1949, when it was sold to Leonard Jarvis. Through the years the demand for bathing facilities increased considerably and, during the Rogers ownership, extensive additions and improvements were made to the original layout.

Another beach resort, which was established at about the same time as the Rogers Beach, comes within the present Vil-

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

lage limits but was not easily accessible to the local people until the Dune Road was finished. This resort, which was owned by Herbert Culver, Sr., of Westhampton, was rather small but it provided bathing accommodations for guests spending the season at the Jagger's Cedar Beach Hotel and at the Apaucuck Point House. Capt. Jerry Rogers of Remsenburg, with his large sloop, furnished a ferry service for the summer people who did not sail their own boats. In about 1925 the Culver beach property was sold to John Cook of Westhampton, who continued the bathing beach for only a few years. Eventually Mr. Cook converted the buildings into cottages for summer rental and they became a part of the Buena Vista colony, which had been developing rapidly since 1916.

The first venture in establishing a beach resort along modern lines was undertaken in 1913-14 by the West Bay Company as a step toward developing the property recently acquired from the N. C. Jessup estate. The spacious building was located on the ocean front at the foot of Jessup Lane and, besides being attractive in design, was planned to afford full enjoyment of the beach and ocean. In addition to the long verandas with comfortable chairs overlooking the sea, there were about two hundred lockers built around spacious sun decks, and a delightful view of the surf could be enjoyed from the Gift Shop and Tea Room on the second floor. The swimming pool was a popular added attraction, especially for the children, who were given an opportunity for instruction in swimming and diving. After a few years, it became necessary to build additional lockers on the north side of the swimming pool and, at the same time, a restaurant was opened on the pool level.

Mrs. Molly (Franklin) Thompson was the able and genial manager of the "West Bay" from the time it was com-



## POPULATION HISTORY

pleted until 1938. All that remained of the popular resort after a storm in September of that year was a small, sagging portion of the main building and the swimming pool, full of sand.

When the modern West Bay bathing beach was completed, the proprietors of the older resorts were concerned with the fear that the long established beaches would suffer, but time soon proved that there were a goodly number of patrons for all the beach clubs. Gradually, the term "Club" has been adapted by all the resort owners in order to exclude basket parties and other undesirables. To become a member and enjoy the privileges of either the Rogers Beach Club or the Swordfish Club, it is only necessary to rent a bath house for the season.

Approximately two years after the West Bay Bathing Beach was opened, a group of summer residents from the Village and Quogue founded the Quantuck Beach Club, which is about one-half mile east of the Beach Lane bridge. The "West Bay" had proved much too modern for some of the more staid and dignified folk of the time, especially when it was discovered that women frequently bathed there without stockings. Beach costumes have become so abbreviated in the past few years that even the most circumspect no longer deplore the lack of hose. Quantuck Beach Club is a club in the true sense of the word and admits only members and their guests.

The wreckage left by the 1938 storm had scarcely been cleared away when the West Bay property was purchased by Keith Morgan from the William C. Atwater estate. With the original swimming pool as a nucleus Mr. Morgan, in 1940, planned and built the Swordfish Club, which is designed in keeping with the times. The low buildings conform with the location and, besides the usual number of bath lockers, the layout includes a row of colorful cabanas overlooking the ocean.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

### *Famous Personalities*

The census figures have shown that little increase in population took place until 1880 or soon after the railroad made eastern Long Island more accessible. However, it was not a great while after the main line from New York to Greenport was completed in 1844 that occasional summer visitors began to find their way to the south shore.

Among the first to be attracted to Catchaponack by the pleasant climate, bathing and fishing was the famous P. T. Barnum, whose exceptional talent for showmanship has made his name synonymous with the circus. Mr. Barnum spent several seasons at the Howell homestead as a "paying guest" of Mrs. Elizabeth Howell, mother of Mortimer Howell. It has been mentioned in the preceeding pages that Mr. Barnum contributed to the growth of the Village by pointing the way toward the first summer hotel.

General John A. Dix, one time Governor of New York State, was one of the first visitors at East Hampton, when the only approach was by train from New York to Greenport and then by sail boat across Gardiner's Bay to the south shore. Perhaps it was the long journey that influenced Gen. Dix to finally settle in Catchaponack. In 1879 he chose a site on lower Beach Lane and built "Seafield", which was the first summer home in the Village. Although the house has undergone renovations from time to time, it still remains and for many years has been owned and occupied in the summer by the A. B. Leach family.

General Dix was an enthusiastic sportsman and spent many hours each day in a blind on the marshes south of his

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home, watching the wild life and occasionally gunning for ducks and snipe.

The General's son, the Rev. Morgan Dix, who was rector at Trinity Episcopal Church in New York, enjoyed vacationing at the home of his parents. The Rev. Mr. Dix gave substantial help at the time the Westhampton Free Chapel was built and later held Episcopal services there during the summer.

Among other distinguished visitors, the Village counts Henry Van Dyke who with his family occupied, for several seasons around 1900, a house overlooking Quantuck Bay near the site of the late Wm. C. Atwater, Sr., residence. Mr. Van Dyke was an ardent fisherman and his greatest pleasure was fishing in the neighboring streams and it is believed locally that from the happy hours spent angling on Aspatuck Creek, he was inspired to write "The Brook".

Dr. Van Dyke was an illustrious person and besides other high callings, he was a Presbyterian clergyman. Frequently during his summer holidays he preached at the Presbyterian Church on Quogue and at the Westhampton Chapel.

Dr. Robert L. Dickinson is probably best remembered in this community because of the Japanese-style house he had built on the beach in about 1903. Dr. Dickinson employed Japanese carpenters\* for the job and strangely enough the oriental design seemed well adapted to the surroundings. The house, which was situated a little east of Rogers Beach, was threatened several times by storms and high seas, but it was finally destroyed by fire in 1920.

Few people appreciate now the distinguished personality and exceptionally fine character of the man, who chose to dwell

\* E. Raynor & Sons were the contractors and completed the work with the aid of a few Japanese carpenters



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

in the Village. Dr. Dickinson was not only a prominent physician, who introduced new methods to the medical profession, but was an artist and sculptor of note. His outstanding achievement in modeling was the "birth series", which was on display at the World's Fair, New York 1939-40.

The kindly and spiritual nature for which Dr. Dickinson was noted and beloved is reflected in the many beautiful prayers he composed. The prayer quoted below has a feeling of Westhampton Beach and was no doubt inspired and written at his home on the dunes.

"We thank Thee, O Thou maker and giver of all things beautiful, for the glory and grace of the world. For the wonders of the sea and sky; for the delight of the eye in color of marsh, and wave of grass stem, and curl of breaker, and leap of foam; for the gladness in the call of a song sparrow; for the scent of Thy sea; for the tonic touch of water and of air. Help us, O God, lest we forget whence these things come. Fill us with gratitude that gives thanks, not in sentiment alone but in living a life, large as Thy sea, open and pure as Thy sky, with grace in it, and growth. Amen."

In more recent years the Village has been proud to count Judge Harold R. Medina as a distinguished member of the community. Judge Medina became prominent in the nation, if not the world, in 1950 when he presided for ten long months at the trial of the country's eleven top communists. So thorough is his knowledge of the law and so high is his integrity as a Judge that the decision he handed down in the case was upheld by the United States Supreme Court.

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Judge Medina first came to Westhampton Beach with his parents when he was a small boy, to spend the summer holidays and his fondness for the neighborhood has continued through the years. Although the home on Apaucuck Point, where he now resides, is a short distance beyond the Village limits, his keen interest in local affairs has made him a resident without debate over boundary lines. In 1939 the Judge established a substantial trust fund for the local library and through his generosity it will be possible eventually to enlarge and modernize the present institution.

It is evident that the Judge and Mrs. Medina have a sincere love for this community inasmuch as they were not deterred when the hurricane in 1938 demolished their home and seriously damaged the Judge's valuable library. Almost at once, plans were made and a new house built near the site of the first one, and at the same time the library was restored and a new wing added. Besides spending the summer at their beautiful estate, the Judge and Mrs. Medina are usually to be found at "To Windward" on weekends and holidays in the "off season".

Many prominent and well-known people have come and gone through the years but mention will be made of only a few who are or have been residents in the Village.

The list includes Frederick E. Crane, who was Chief Justice of the New York State Court of Appeals for several years. Judge Crane and his family occupied the Silas Tuttle house on Beach Lane during the many seasons they spent in the Village.

Thomas T. C. Crane was a long-time member of the summer colony and with his sister lived in their own home on Griffing Avenue. Judge Crane became well known when he was

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

elected Judge of the New York State Supreme Court and after his term expired, continued to be a prominent attorney, serving as District Attorney of New York County.

Edward R. Finch, who needs no introduction in this community, is an Associate Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals. Judge and Mrs. Finch have their home on Seafield Lane and in recent years have been somewhat permanent residents. Mrs. Finch is a member of the Delafield family and her parents, who built a large house on Exchange Point, were among the first to join the summer colony.

On several occasions during the 1920s, the Village was honored by a visit from the late Franklin D. Roosevelt and Mrs. Roosevelt. Mr. Roosevelt was Governor of New York State at the time and came here as a guest of his law associate, Basil O'Connor. The distinguished visitors were guests of honor during each short stay at a reception given by Mr. and Mrs. O'Connor. At these gatherings, many local residents were graciously entertained and given an opportunity to meet the man who later became one of the nation's outstanding Presidents.

Through the course of the years Westhampton Beach has had some native sons who hold a place of interest in local history, but none perhaps as famous as the personalities mentioned above.

The Village is justly proud of Robert S. Pelletreau who, in his early life lived in the house which is now the home of William H. Winters, Sr. Mr. Pelletreau was the son of Nancy Stevens Pelletreau, a descendant of the first Stevens family who settled at an early date in the Potunk area. As a young man, Mr. Pelletreau was eager for higher education and, in order to attain his ambition, resorted to any kind of work he could



## POPULATION HISTORY

find. Several summer vacations were spent clerking in E. H. Bishop's store and at the same time he acted as janitor at the Chapel. After he was graduated from Law School, he established his practice and home in Patchogue, where he continued to live until his death in 1943. Mr. Pelletreau was active in politics all his life and was for many years the leader in the Republican Party in this County. He also served Suffolk County as Surrogate in the period between 1921-1937.

In 1845 when the whaling industry was at its peak, Captain Franklin Jessup sailed as mate on the "Manhattan" with Captain Mercator Cooper of Southampton. The voyage\* became famous, at least in local annals, through an incident that was experienced while the ship was in the Pacific. Briefly, as the story goes, some ship-wrecked Japanese sailors were sighted on a small island and, after an easy rescue was made, Captain Cooper proceeded to return the men to their native land. The "Manhattan" was one of the first American ships to enter a Japanese port, but owing to the fact that no official business was involved, the episode has had no place of importance in American history. The reception given the rescue party was anything but cordial; however, the Long Island sailors managed to pick up some interesting souvenirs. A few mementos of the unusual experience are still prized by the Jessup family.

Captain Jessup was the grandson seven times removed from John Jessup, who was one of the first land owners in Potunk. After many years at sea Captain Jessup retired and was appointed the first "keeper" at the Potunk Life Saving Station.

Rogers Bishop of Westhampton was also with Captain Cooper on the memorable voyage in the Pacific and was the last

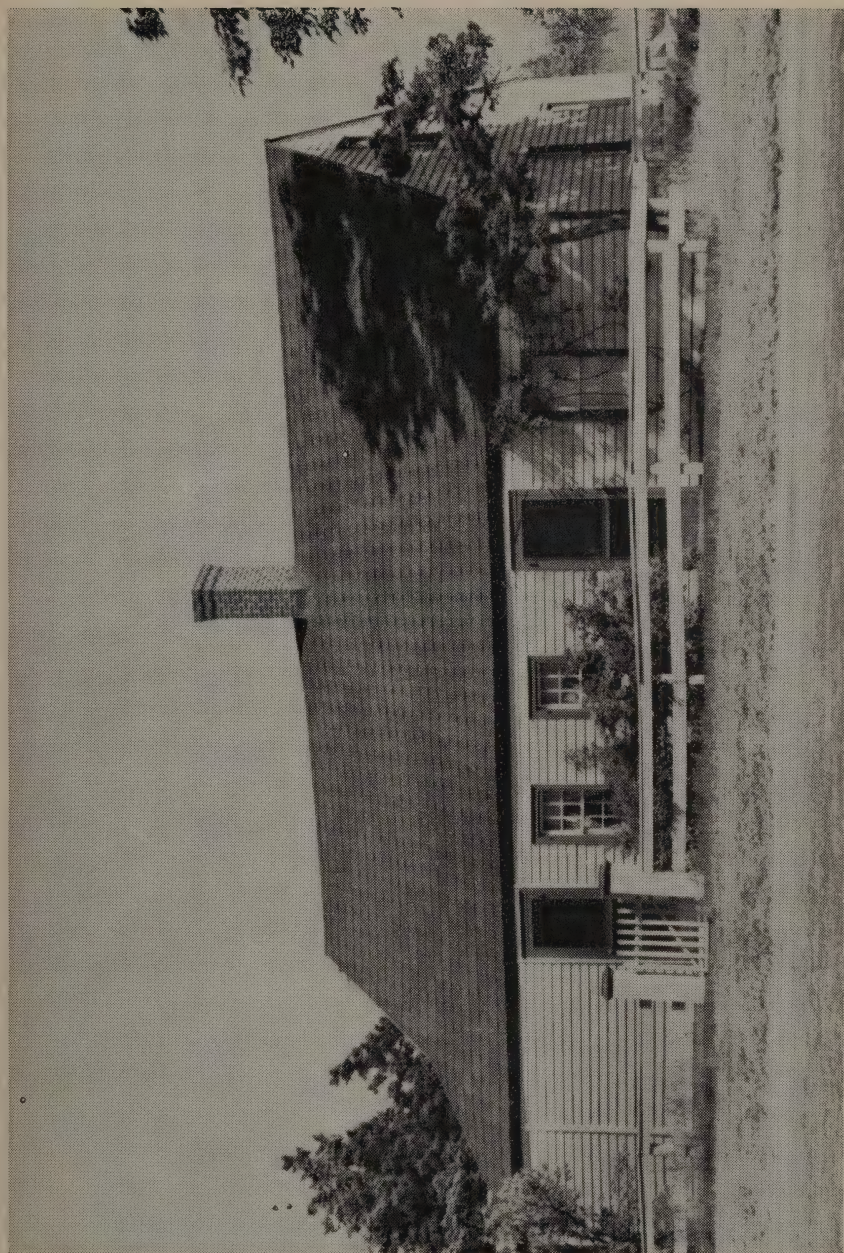
\* For complete story see "Whale Fishery on Long Island" by H. D. Sleight

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

survivor of the "Manhattan's" crew. Mr. Bishop spent most of his early life on whaling expeditions and a log book he kept, telling a graphic story of one trip, is now in possession of Herman F. Bishop of this Village. The men who followed the sea in whaling days were required to be versatile and ready to meet any emergency which might arise in line of duty. Perhaps none were more apt than Mr. Bishop who, on one voyage, successfully amputated one of Captain Royce's hands after he had suffered a severe injury while experimenting with a bomb lance. Years later, Mr. Bishop retired from seafaring and opened a general store in Westhampton, which was carried on after he died in 1881 by his son, "Stant" Bishop.

Whenever the year 1849 is mentioned, it brings to mind the era when the "gold rush" to California and the "forty-niners" made news and history. Unsuccessful whaling voyages the year before and the increased cost of outfitting the ships were only two reasons why the industry had started on a down grade, and this situation undoubtedly influenced many men to give up the sea and seek a new way to fortune. The "gold fever" attacked the county quite generally and on February 8th, 1849 the old whale ship, "Sabina" set sail from Gardiner's Bay with a group of men on board, who were anxious to try their luck with a pick and shovel. In all, some two hundred and fifty men left Southampton Town in search of gold and Catchaponack was represented in the enterprise by James McCue, Edwin Halsey, Franklin Jessup (crew on the Sabina), N. B. Rogers and perhaps others, whose names are not listed. These men can lay no special claim to fame because of their venture, particularly as no great fortunes crowned their efforts. The hardships encountered in the gold fields often surpassed the hard life at sea, and the men





"FORSTER HOMESTEAD" MAIN STREET, HOME OF MISS AUGUSTA MEEKER

Photo 1946





JESSUP HOMESTEAD BUILT ABOUT 1735. STOOD ON CORNER OF MAIN STREET AND POTUNK LANE

Copy from old postcard.

## POPULATION HISTORY

who survived the ordeal were glad to return to their homes and seek employment in some less hazardous occupation.

Without the Panama Canal for a short cut, the trip to California had to be made around the Horn, so even with favorable weather conditions it took four or five months to make the journey.

The old "Sabina" of Sag Harbor, a famous whaler in her day, was destined never to return to her home port, and after she was declared no longer seaworthy went to a final resting place under the fill on the shore of San Francisco Bay.

### *The Professions*

When the Village people, both men and women, labored from dawn 'till dark for their daily bread, they were apparently not troubled with many of the ailments which have beset the later generations. Sulphur and molasses, catnip tea and concoctions made from roots and herbs served as effective remedies for the usual disorders. However, if serious illness occurred, a doctor could be summoned from either Riverhead or Eastport. From the latter village, Dr. B. F. Rogers ministered to the sick of the community for miles around, between the years of 1895 and 1931. Life of the country doctor in the early period was a rigorous affair, the only transportation being the horse and buggy or sleigh in the winter. Many weary miles were traveled to visit a patient and often at night regardless of weather conditions. Doctors Benjamin and Hardrant were physicians who were frequently called upon to come over the sandy trail from Riverhead to attend the sick in this vicinity.

It was not until about 1890 that the local people had the benefit of a resident physician. Dr. John D. Brundage came from Connecticut in that year and established his home and



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

office in a house, which stood near the site of the Weixelbaum Market. Later the house was moved across the street where it remained until the property was sold in 1918 to A. E. White. Again the house was moved, this time to South Country Road and is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Rogers, Sr.

Dr. Brundage retired from practice in 1907 and his place was taken by Dr. Noah S. Wadhams, also from Connecticut. At first, Dr. Wadhams and his family occupied the house vacated by his predecessor, but in 1913 moved to the new home and office which he had built on the corner of Potunk Lane and South Country Road. Dr. Wadhams gained a place of high esteem in the Village and the neighboring communities through his exceptional ability as a medical man and his untiring efforts in behalf of his patients. His sudden and untimely death in October, 1929 was a grievous shock to his large host of friends.

A few years before Dr. Wadhams came to the Village, Dr. Charles Foster Gardiner was a practicing physician here with a home and office in the house that had been the Mill Road School before it was remodeled in 1903 by Mortimer Howell. Dr. Gardiner died in 1908.

In the spring following the death of Dr. Wadhams, the office was rented to Dr. Leray Davis, a native of Coram, L. I. A few years later Dr. Davis moved into the new home with large office space that he had had built on the corner of Potunk Lane and Oneck Road.

Dr. Rodney Wyman came to the Village in 1925 but only remained for ten years. Soon after he began to practice here, he built the house on Mill Road which was eventually sold to E. J. Brockett and has since been a funeral home.



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Dr. Seth R. Jagger was well known in this vicinity before he came to the Village in 1932 as a practicing physician. Dr. Jagger is a descendant of the Jagger family who were among the first settlers in Westhampton and, while he was born and brought up in Flushing, L. I., his summer holidays were usually spent at Cedar Beach. Dr. Jagger and his family at first occupied one of the Parsons houses on Beach Lane where he also had his office. After several moves he bought the Mitchell Stevens property on Main Street and the spacious house afforded ample room for both living quarters and his office.

The Village witnessed a revolutionary step in the practice of medicine when in 1946 Doctors Jagger and Davis centralized their offices and founded the Westhampton Medical Group. The interior of the house, where Dr. Jagger had previously lived and practiced, was completely renovated and arranged to provide the necessary rooms for the new project.

Dr. Paul V. Waldo joined the staff as the resident physician and with his family occupies an apartment on the second floor. Dr. Waldo is well known in the Village, having attended school here and spent the greater part of his boyhood in Westhampton. He is a son of the late Dr. Ralph Waldo, who was a prominent surgeon in New York for many years.

In 1934 the house vacated by Dr. Wyman a short time before was rented by Dr. Donald Keller. A native of Iowa, Dr. Keller received his medical training at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, and had been graduated quite recently when he located in the Village. His ability was soon recognized and in a matter of two or three years his successful practice enabled him to build (in 1937) a home and office on the corner of Main Street and Seafeld Lane. The following year a small private hospital

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was added and for the first time hospital care was made available within the Village. While Dr. Keller served as a surgeon in the Navy during World War II, the hospital was used by the Coast Guard as an infirmary for the men stationed in this area. After the war ended in 1945, Dr. Keller resumed his practice and reopened the hospital.

The dental profession had not been represented in the Village until 1914 when Dr. E. J. C. Smith opened an office on Main Street in the house which had been occupied in turn by Doctors Brundage and Wadhams. Dr. Smith was originally from Hampton Bays and had finished his professional training at the University of Buffalo a few months before he began to practice here. Two years later he purchased, enlarged and remodeled a small house on the south side of Main Street where he and Mrs. Smith, who was a dental hygienist, continued dentistry until 1951\*.

Dr. Aaron Levin, formerly of Greenport, L. I., had been recently graduated from the University of Pennsylvania when he established in 1934 a dental office on the second floor of the Patio Building. Dr. Levin served for four years in the United States Army during the second World War and, after he was released, resumed his practice at the same location.

The Village has not been favored by as many members of the legal profession as it has by the medical; perhaps because the need is not sufficiently great in the small and law-abiding community.

The first attorney to practice in the Village was Harry M. Howell who resided, many years ago, in the Tuttle homestead

\* Dr. & Mrs. Smith died within the month in the Spring of 1951.

## POPULATION HISTORY

on Beach Lane. Later Mr. Howell moved to Southampton, where he continued to follow his legal pursuits.

Although George M. Percy has been a resident of the Village since 1914, Southampton has been his place of business except for a short period when he maintained an office in the Village. Mr. Percy is a native of Brooklyn and through the years has become one of the most prominent attorneys on Long Island. Outside of his general practice, he is the legal adviser for the Southampton Town Board and for the Incorporated Village of Quogue. Mr. Percy served in the same capacity for the Village of Westhampton Beach but, because of conflicting meeting dates, he was forced to resign from the local Board in 1946. At that time his place was taken by his son and legal associate, George M. Percy, Jr.

Lucy Liedtke Bishop has the distinction of being the only female graduate of the local school who has achieved a degree in law and become a successful attorney. Mrs. Bishop came to the Village with her parents in 1896, and after finishing her preliminary education here in 1908 attended Middlebury College for one year. She then entered the New York University School of Law and was graduated in 1911. Soon afterwards Mrs. Bishop was admitted to the Bar and for two years practiced in the lower courts in New York City. In 1916 she married Herman F. Bishop of this Village and for several years following resided in central New York State, where Mr. Bishop was employed by the State Highway Department. The Bishops returned to Westhampton Beach to live permanently in 1922, and since that time Mrs. Bishop has continued to follow her profession but has not maintained an office outside of her home. Mrs. Bishop was the first woman to be admitted to practice in Suffolk County, another distinction of which she should be justly proud.



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In more recent years William M. Burcher has attained a place of importance among the attorneys of this county. His activities at first were confined to desk space in the Hampton Chronicle office, but in 1951 he moved to the Westhampton Theatre building where he has an adequate office. Mr. Burcher was originally from Brooklyn and received his legal education at the Columbia School of Law, from where he was graduated in 1935. He has been interested and active in civic affairs and the Republican Party politics since he has lived in the Village. The Burcher family had been summer residents in the vicinity for many seasons prior to 1941 when they purchased a home on Beach Lane and settled here permanently.

## IV

### *Social and Civic Development*

#### *Political Changes*

One need not draw too heavily upon the imagination to realize that the social life among the early settlers of Catchaponack was extremely limited. No more so perhaps than in all the other small and isolated colonies of that day when the business of wringing a livelihood from the soil and sea consumed every waking hour. Many years elapsed before the horizons were widened by newspapers and the few books in the homes of the more well-to-do families were usually on deeply religious themes. With small means of communication the pioneer citizens in the scattered hamlets lived in a world of their own and the everyday matters of local interest occupied their thoughts and provided topics of conversation. An occasional wedding, burial or quilting party were about the only functions offering the hard-working people an opportunity to meet and enjoy a period of relaxation and respite from their daily labors.

After the War of the Revolution, the fourth of July became an important holiday of the year and the usual picnics with significant oratory in celebration of the day added another bright spot to the otherwise dull routine existence.

In colonial days and in later years as well, Village life has centered around the church. The laws by which the early settlers were governed called for strict observance of the Sabbath and required a full attendance at meeting, but little is found in the records to indicate that the penalties threatened for non-

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attendance were imposed to any great extent. However, "Sabbath breaking" was not tolerated and seems to have been a more serious offense than the failure to appear at church\*. On Sunday, work was laid aside in so far as possible and the families from near and far gathered at the meeting house for worship. It was long the custom to remain for the entire day and the basket lunch, shared with relatives and friends, afforded a pleasant interlude between the morning and afternoon sessions. Without a Bible or other reading material in the pre-Revolutionary homes, the only mental stimulus available was supplied by the Preacher, who repaid the congregation for their presence by delivering a sermon often lasting two or three hours. Sermons in the early days were not only lengthy but were also profound and eloquent, usually dealing with a grim subject such as the "Eternity of Hell Torments".

The church still holds an important place in the social life of the community, but it no longer provides the only occasion for friendly gatherings. Diversified interests, growing out of a more complex manner of living, changed the picture and the need for a richer, fuller life has been filled by numerous social and civic organizations. Including church societies, more than forty organized groups can be counted in the community at present; all founded for a definite purpose and all contributing in a special way to the well-being of a progressive village. The above figure does not take into account some organizations that flourished for a while but have now gone out of existence.

A complete history of all the organized groups in the Village, both past and present, does not come within the scope of this small book but a few will be touched on briefly.

\* Southampton Town Records Volume V Page 157



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The Chapel Aid Society was the first organized group in the Village with a general membership drawn from the Protestant churches. The founding of the society is significant in that it marked the era when the local women began to take an active part in public affairs. More details will follow under the heading of the Westhampton Free Chapel.

It was many years later that the Village Improvement Society was started for the purpose of accomplishing exactly what the name implies. The idea for the Society originated with a group of local women and much credit for its success was due to the late Mrs. Stephen F. Griffing, Sr. (formerly Mrs. Franklin Thompson, Sr.), who was the competent president for several years. Organized in 1896, the Village Improvement Society took the first steps toward inspiring civic pride and during the years made valuable contributions to the Village, which have had a lasting influence. The greatest contribution was made when the Society took the initiative in securing funds to build a home for the Library and later in providing for its development and support. Through a combination of circumstances, the interest gradually waned and in 1915 the Society was disbanded. Ten years later all the remaining assets were turned over to the Library.

The founding of the Westhampton Country Club dates back to 1890 when a group of summer residents promoted a plan that has endured with more success than was anticipated at the time. Golf\* had recently been introduced in this country and the enthusiasm with which the game was received led to establishing the Club.

No time was lost and in the same year the certificate of incorporation was signed by the following men: Aaron P. Whitehead, Theodore F. Jackson, W. W. Van Voorhis, Augustus Za-

\* Golf had been played in Scotland for 300 years before it was brought to the U. S. in 1888.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

briski, William B. Clark, Griswold Denison, Charles M. Howard and S. K. DeForest. It is quite probable that Mr. Denison is the only one of the group who is still represented here by later generations.

Originally the Club was located in Quogue and immediately following incorporation a nine hole golf course was laid out, where the members could enjoy their favorite sport for seven dollars a season. The only semblance of a club house was a small building that served no purpose outside of providing storage space for clubs and other gear.

A few years later a plan was proposed to enlarge the first course by laying out a new one with eighteen holes for the use of both Westhampton Beach and Quogue. When this scheme fell through, the Club moved its center of activities to a new location on Beach Lane, opposite and slightly south of the Hampton Inn. At this point (about 1898) an ambitious program was undertaken and it included building a club house, tennis courts, a baseball diamond and a nine hole golf course. The new and added attractions changed the character of the Club and very soon it became the center of social life in the summer colony. Outdoor sports were the order of the day, while dancing and other entertainments in the evenings contributed greatly toward making the summer holidays gay and festive.

Golf, however, continued to be the chief attraction and the enthusiasm for the game was shared by some of the local people. Otto Kammerer, who had become quite proficient in the sport, played around the nine hole course, finishing with a score of thirty-six which was (and still is) considered an outstanding record.

Later on the Club did not succeed so well and in 1914 the late William C. Atwater, Sr., purchased the building and moved

## SOCIAL AND CIVIC DEVELOPMENT

it to the present location on Potunk Lane facing Main Street. The Club and tennis courts occupy a part of the original West Bay Company property, while the exceptionally fine eighteen hole golf course was laid out on the many acres which Mr. Atwater purchased in Westhampton. A board of managers leased the Club facilities from Mr. Atwater for thirty-five years following these changes, and the Club continued to play a vital role in the social life of the Village.

There were, however, times during the years when the Club had a struggle to survive, mainly due to financial difficulties. Such circumstances did not make for an entirely satisfactory management and eventually it was decided in 1950 to purchase the Club property from the Atwater estate. A group of interested members formulated a plan to finance the undertaking with the result that the Westhampton Country Club is now owned by the members.

The Club sponsored a yacht squadron for many years but after the club house at Speonk Shore was demolished in 1938, the Yacht Club became a separate organization.

During the sixty odd years since the Club was founded, there has been a long succession of superintendents who have attended to the details of the management. Few, if any, filled the position as long as Frank D. Gould, who was in charge of operations for nearly fifteen years. James Rosser was engaged as greens keeper at the time the eighteen hole golf course was completed and still continues in that capacity. In recent years Mr. Rosser also has had an active part in the general management of the Club.

There had been no fraternal organization in the Village until 1906 when the Junior Order of Mechanics founded a lodge.



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The new organization was accepted with such enthusiasm that the need for a suitable meeting place was met in the same year, by erecting the Mechanic Hall at the cost of \$7,000. The membership of the Lodge was drawn to a great extent from the men in the Coast Guard but, as the character of that service changed, membership fell off and interest lagged until finally the Lodge was disbanded in 1939.

Two years after the Junior Order was founded, the Daughters of America, an auxiliary branch, was installed to share the work and interests of the parent lodge. The Star of Hope Chapter still continues to meet and Mrs. J. Mitchell Raynor has served as secretary since the time of inception.

Both organizations promote a program of Americanization directed toward better citizenship and provide certain insurance benefits for the members.

The Auditorium on the ground floor of Mechanic Hall was frequently rented in the past for social functions and has been the scene of many dances and entertainments. In more recent times, with school auditoriums available, the Hall has not been in demand, but it did serve the Village well for many years.

In 1916 a new activity took shape when twenty-five men from the Village and neighboring communities combined their interest and talent in music to organize the Sea Side Band. Following a year of practice under the leadership of Professor Koener, the Band appeared in full uniform to lead the Memorial Day parade. Professor Koener was an old-time music teacher who traveled through the towns on the eastern part of the Island, giving private as well as group instruction. After the school band became proficient enough to appear in public, the

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Sea Side Band was discontinued and with other organizations has taken a place in past history.

Years ago the few local men who were interested in Freemasonry could only follow their interest by becoming members of a lodge in some larger nearby town. However, the number had increased sufficiently by 1925 to make possible a Square Club, which is the preliminary step toward establishing a Masonic Lodge. A year later the Potunk Lodge was chartered and the present substantial membership also includes men from neighboring villages.

The Square Club sponsors a Christmas party for children each year which is the highlight of the holiday season so far as the youngsters are concerned.

Both the Masons and the Square Club hold meetings in the lodge room of the Mechanics Hall. For the past twenty years the management and operation of the Hall has been in the hands of the Mechanic Hall Association in which the Masonic Lodge and Square Club share a controlling interest.

It was not until 1946 that a Chapter of the Eastern Star was installed here to complete the Masonic Circle. Prior to that time the local women, who are members, attended meetings in Center Moriches, Riverhead and later in Eastport.

An organization for the civic betterment of the Village was long overdue and greatly needed when the Westhampton Association was founded in 1924. The Village Improvement Society had been defunct for some years and the need for a concerted effort to improve some existing conditions was apparent to local and summer residents alike. The Association was dedicated to a program of civic progress, which would bring perman-

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ent benefits to the community as a whole. The first president of the new coalition was Judge E. R. Finch and the other officers supporting him were: Vice-President A. P. Rogers, Secretary J. T. Stevens, Treasurer C. H. Redfield and D. P. Cobb, who acted as Counsel.

For nearly 30 years the Association has been active and the wide scope of the program undertaken has included planting trees on Main Street, improving the grounds at the Railroad Station, also painting the building and sending tax assessment notices to property owners in the autumn.

Perhaps no service that the Association undertakes has been of greater value than posting houses closed in the winter, offering a reward for information leading to the conviction of any person found guilty of tampering with the property in the absence of the owner. Still another service offered has been to keep the members informed of any pending legislature of particular local interest.

The history of the local volunteer firemen dates back to the latter part of the last century and the story of the first organization, like many other early ventures in progress, has a humorous side in this generation. The late Howell Stevens was instrumental in organizing the first company of vamps, and the only equipment at the time consisted of an antiquated three seated wagon donated by Captain Franklin Jessup and a length of hose which was purchased from funds solicited by George E. Winters. This strange outfit was pulled by the men themselves, but how effective such primitive equipment functioned can readily be imagined.

However, from this humble beginning the Fire Department eventually emerged and keeping pace with the times, has



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performed a service of vital importance in the Village. It had not been possible to have a fire-fighting company with any degree of efficiency until after the Quantuck Water Company completed the public water system with hydrants along the highways. When this was accomplished in 1902, the Quogue and Westhampton Beach Fire Department was organized and for the first time in history the two villages had real fire protection. Each town was a separate fire district and each elected, from among their citizens, Fire Commissioners, who attended to the details of administration.

The problem of housing Westhampton's share of equipment was soon taken care of by erecting a fire house on Grif-fing Avenue. On the second floor of the frame building a large room provided a place for meetings and recreation. About fifteen years later it was decided that a more central location would add to the efficiency of operations, and the fire house was then moved to Glovers Lane where it still remains.

As the population of the two Villages increased, the joint organization was no longer necessary or practical; so in 1918 a dissolution was agreed upon and since then each town has maintained an independent fire company.

The Westhampton Beach Fire Department continues to use the original building, which by now is wholly inadequate and only by means of a "lean to" here and there can the equipment be crowded in. The firemen take a special pride in the care and operation of the five pieces of apparatus in use at present, and this number includes a hook and ladder truck of 1924 vintage\*, a Sanford (1930), a Seagrave and a new Dodge (1950); the latter three are combination pumping engines and hose car-

\* Sold in 1951 and replaced with a more modern truck

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riers. The fifth piece of equipment is a hose carrier or "Speed Wagon" built in 1949 on a Chrysler chassis by the young and energetic members of the Department. Many hours and a good deal of "know how" were required to produce this useful auxiliary to the other fire fighting equipment.

Soon after the Allied Armies had gained a victory in World War I, a post of the American Legion was founded in 1919 by the local veterans and meetings were held at the "Good Templers" Hall in Westhampton. Following the usual custom of honoring a comrade lost in battle, the new organization chose to name the Post for Arthur Ellis Hamm. The Legion was successful from the start and in a few years was sufficiently well established to purchase the old Hall. Through the combined efforts of the members and the Woman's Club, extensive alterations and decorating were done, that resulted in a most attractive meeting room.

The Arthur Ellis Hamm Post, with the cooperation of the Woman's Auxiliary, continues to be active in carrying on the program to which the Legion is dedicated.

Since the Woman's Club was founded nearly twenty-five years ago, it has gained a place of eminence in the Village by contributing materially to a broader cultural and social life among the women. The idea of forming a club was first suggested by the late Mrs. Emmett E. Boone (Adele E.), who extended an invitation to the women of the community to meet at the Howell House Club in March, 1928 to discuss the plan. The advantages to be derived from a club were apparent to all who attended, and before the meeting was concluded the ground work for the organization had been laid. Through Mrs. Boone's untir-

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ing efforts as the first president, the membership increased rapidly and in October of the same year the club was chartered under the incorporation laws of the State of New York.

With the first burst of enthusiasm, meetings were held each week but it soon was evident that the problem of providing worthwhile programs so frequently was not possible. Eventually it was decided to meet once each month, on the second Tuesday, and the by-laws were amended accordingly. The programs have always been maintained on a high standard and efforts are made to have them sufficiently diversified to interest all the members.

The activities of the Woman's Club are not confined entirely to the regular meetings, but the group stands ready to support civic and philanthropic causes when the need arises. Each year the Club sponsors a large card party and the generous response of the local people makes it possible to contribute substantially to the infantile paralysis drive.

During the war years (1941-45) the Club dispensed with the usual activities and in a workroom on the second floor of the Patio Building made knitted garments and utility kits for the local men in the armed forces\*. After the hostilities ended and this service was no longer needed, the Club sponsored a group of women, who organized the Cancer Committee for the purpose of making dressings to be used by patients either at home or in hospitals. Worn household linens are utilized and, since the work commenced seven years ago, the Committee has turned out dressings in numbers which by now have reached an astronomical figure.

By force of circumstances the Club has changed meeting places many times through the years, but at present a somewhat

\* Many letters of appreciation are on file in a scrap book in the Village Historical Department.



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permanent location has been found at the Parish House of the Presbyterian Church. The large, attractive room and modern kitchen are well suited to the need and the privilege of using these facilities is compensated by making a small donation to the Church.

The concepts upon which the Club was founded have been faithfully fulfilled and the hundred and fifty names on the roster at present are evidence of the ever-increasing success of the original venture.

The Men's Club as a formal organization came later and is the outgrowth of a small group of men who began, in about 1934, to meet once a month at the Methodist Church for supper and a social evening. After five or six years the interest in these gatherings fell off considerably, and in order to stimulate interest the Men's Club was founded along broader lines with emphasis on current events. The new Club immediately attracted a large membership and since 1940 the well-attended monthly dinners are followed by an address on a timely subject by an outstanding speaker. The Men's Club has always contributed generously to civic projects and sponsors the local Boy Scout Troop.

The Horticultural Society was organized in about 1925 and the membership included expert gardeners living in and near the Village. The Society directed much of its activity each year toward an exhibition of fruit, vegetables and flowers, and on these occasions an invitation was extended to the women of the community to display flower arrangements in competition. The pleasure and interest created by the exhibitions eventually led to the Westhampton Garden Club, which came into being in 1928 and was made up mainly of women from the Westhampton,

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Remsenburg and Quogue summer colony. The first officers elected were: Mrs. Arthur D. Dana, president; Mrs. Charles D. Hilles, vice-president; Mrs. Charles E. Potts, corresponding secretary; Mrs. D. T. Layman, Jr., recording secretary and Mrs. Thomas D. Webb, treasurer.

At the monthly meetings the members have the opportunity of hearing a speaker, who specializes in some branch of horticulture, garden planning or flower arrangements. Each summer the Club activities are highlighted by a flower show or a garden tour, which is open to the public and always well attended.

From time to time the Garden Club has planted shrubbery and trees, which have improved the appearance of the Village, and one of the more recent accomplishments along these lines is the foundation planting at the Library.

Meanwhile the original Horticultural Society continues to hold meetings each month and the evening is devoted to an exchange of ideas of mutual interest to the members.

The Westhampton Beach Chamber of Commerce was incorporated in 1948. The idea originated with a group of progressive businessmen, who considered that affiliation with the prominent and well-known national organization could contribute a service to the Village beyond the limits of the existing clubs and associations.

A leaflet describing the many outstanding features of the community has been widely circulated and special attention also is given to inquiries concerning hotels and other accommodations, either by correspondence or at the headquarters in the Grimshaw and Palmer store. Under the leadership of George Carmany, the Chamber of Commerce was well established and the

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varied program has successfully rendered a service comparable to similar organizations throughout the country.

On the long list of organized groups, perhaps none is dedicated to a more practical purpose than the Home Bureau, sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture and the New York State College of Home Economics. The comprehensive program offers many opportunities to the women in the suburban and rural districts. Classes are held in cooking, sewing, rug making, furniture refinishing and upholstering. The knowledge gained by this training adds greatly to the efficient and economical management of the home.

The Home Bureau was first introduced here in about 1936 by the Woman's Club with the assistance of instructors from the headquarters of the Suffolk County Farm and Home Bureau at Riverhead.

When old hats, dresses and tired pieces of furniture were remodeled and began to take on new life, the enthusiasm increased accordingly. The interest continued to grow and in 1939 there were a sufficient number of women registered for the courses to make it possible to form an independent unit. During the following years the proficiency achieved by the members in arts and crafts could not have been accomplished without the aid of professional leadership.

The question of a suitable War Memorial had been under consideration periodically for years before the problem was satisfactorily solved. The first real headway was made when a committee, composed of representatives from the various organizations in the Village, combined forces and eventually presented an acceptable plan. After numerous meetings and



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thoughtful discussion, it was concluded that an ambulance for the use of the residents in and near the Village would be an appropriate testimonial to the men who gave their lives in the two World Wars.

An endless amount of work was involved in arranging for the purchase, maintenance, etc., of the ambulance, and the question of securing sufficient funds for the project was the first problem with which the committee was faced. The value of an ambulance in the community could be well foreseen, and by diligent efforts on the part of the committee the goal was reached through donations from the local organizations and private subscriptions.

In October, 1950 the ambulance was purchased at a cost of \$3,600., and on a cold, rainy morning in November (11th) of the same year, dedication services were held on the Village Green. It was then formally placed in service and at the conclusion of the first year of operation eighty calls had been answered.

Also on November 11th, 1950 the Westhampton War Memorial Ambulance Association, Inc., was chartered. At the first meeting, Fred Williams was elected president, Eugene McFarland vice-president, Rudolph Kammerer treasurer and Edward H. Rogers, Jr., secretary.

Residents of the Village and vicinity have the privilege of joining the Association by paying an annual fee of two dollars, and membership entitles a family to free use of the ambulance at any time if authorized by a doctor.

It seems quite fitting to mention here with gratitude the efforts of the devoted committee, who with Fred Williams as leader worked untiringly to make the ambulance a reality. In

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equal measure, appreciation is due the volunteer drivers who are on call at all times, also M. J. Parlato for providing garage space and, last but not least, special recognition goes to Maurice R. La Vista for receiving and relaying all calls on a twenty-four hour basis.

### *The Incorporated Village*

The early settlers, who established the hamlet at Catchaponack, naturally considered themselves a part of the Southampton colony and during the first and future years remained under the jurisdiction of the Town Meeting, and later the Town Board. Two centuries or more passed without any significant political changes but the demands of the thriving village, that had emerged from the little hamlet, called for a more modern type of government. A plan to form an incorporated village had been discussed informally for some time before the scheme was presented for public consideration at a series of meetings held in 1927. A radical change in government does not invariably meet with universal approval and many residents were not receptive to the idea. Therefore, progress was slow until a proposition to incorporate three square miles was offered and, after the usual debate, the issue was voted upon, in November, 1928, with successful results. The Incorporated Village of Westhampton Beach begins at Depot Road and Oneck Lane on the west and runs through to Aspatuck Creek and Quantuck Bay on the east; the ocean is the south boundary and the north line is two or three hundred yards above the railroad tracks. Obviously, Westhampton and Quogue do not come within the limits of the Incorporated Village.

Immediately after the Certificate of Incorporation was granted by the State of New York, an election was held to select a mayor and four trustees. The men chosen to serve on the first

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Village Board were: Mayor, William T. Hulse; Trustees, Ernest H. Bishop, William Slattery, Moses Weixelbaum and Emerson M. Raynor. The first Village Board meeting was held on December 7th, 1928 and at that time the following appointments were made: Clerk and Treasurer, Miss Amy Raynor; Superintendent of Highways, Herman F. Bishop; Attorney, Almon G. Rasquin of Riverhead; Health Officer, Dr. Rodney Wyman. The Village Office occupied space in the Nugent Theatre Building until 1932, when a section of the Patio Building was taken for the Village Hall.

A few months after her appointment, Miss Raynor resigned and her place was taken by Mrs. Evelyn Halsey. In 1931 Mrs. Halsey was succeeded by Miss Lillian Witt, who has competently served as clerk and treasurer since that time.

A vast amount of work was involved in setting up the new form of government and the Board was kept busy for months arranging for the purchase of office furniture and equipment for the highway department, and also segregating the Village affairs from those of the Town. It was necessary to make an adjustment of the tax rolls and divisions in the police and fire departments, all of which had to be reorganized to conform with the Incorporated Village laws.

Early in 1929 the police district was established and Stanley Teller was assigned to the position of chief officer with John Callan\* acting as patrolman. Officer Teller had served for three years previously in this area, while employed by the Southampton Town Constabulary. Later in the same year (1929) Timothy Robinson joined the local police force.

Once the necessary adjustments had been accomplished and the Incorporated Village had been placed on a sound busi-

\* John Callan served the Village efficiently until the time of his death in 1948



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ness foundation, the Trustees began to consider a program of expansion and improvement. Widening of Main Street from Library Avenue to Potunk Lane was the first major project undertaken, and when it was completed in 1932 the result was a decided contribution to the appearance of the Village, besides eliminating the former traffic problems caused by the narrow Main Street.

During the same period, an equally important addition was made when the Yacht Basin was built in 1931. The small harbor on Stevens Lane with the attractive park surrounding it affords a convenient mooring place for commercial fishermen and for pleasure crafts belonging to the summer and local residents. Each summer, many fine yachts from distant places take advantage of the docking facilities for which the Village makes no charge.

The list of permanent improvements which have been made since incorporation is much too lengthy to include here but, when necessary, information can be obtained from the files at the Village Office.

The venture made twenty-five years ago in localizing the government has withstood the test of time, and even the casual observer must realize that the roadsides are now well kept in the summer and an efficient job of snow removal can be depended upon in the winter.

## V

*Schools*                      *Churches*                      *Library*  
                                 *Cemetery*

### *Presbyterian Church*

It is quite probable that the first settlers in Catchaponack and the adjoining communities followed the traditions of their upbringing and held simple religious meetings from the time the permanent homes were established in the western end of the Township. The early leanings of all Long Island, as well as Southampton Town, were Presbyterian, and so it was quite natural for that denomination to gain the first foothold here and found the church, which has endured for more than two centuries.

The first house of worship was built in 1742 and stood at Beaver Dam near the south west corner of the present cemetery. The local congregation, in the beginning, was a part of the South Haven Parish and for a few years was under the leadership of a clergyman who made rather infrequent visits to the small and isolated groups. This custom was changed in 1748 when the Rev. Nehemiah Greenman took charge of the work but, being a highly educated man for his day, was transferred in 1754 to a larger parish. In the same year the Rev. Abner Reeve was called to Beaver Dam, and under his guidance the church was received in the Presbytery in 1755.\*

The usual stipend for a clergyman at the western part of the Island in the 1700s appears to have been around 60 pounds

\* Records dating back to 1794 are at the Presbyterian Church on Quogue and still earlier ones are in the Church Archives at Philadelphia, Pa.

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per year, but an entry in the local church records mentions paying a Mr. Overton 30 pounds a year and his board.

At present, there is no one living who can recall anything regarding the size and architecture of the first meeting house, but it is quite probable that it was a small, frame building lacking everything but the barest essentials. N. S. Prime in his history of Long Island mentions "a warming house" near the church, where parishioners warmed themselves and replenished the hot coals in their foot warmers before meeting began.

These stoic souls continued to worship in their little church for more than eighty years. In the course of time, however, the congregation agreed that a church, more centrally located and equally accessible, would be an advantage to the members from Quogue, Westhampton and Catchaponack. A site was acquired in Quogue and a new Presbyterian Church "at the head of Quantuck Bay" was completed in 1832. It is quite difficult for the later generations to realize that at the time the country was open and the beach could be seen from the front entrance. The new edifice was designed along ecclesiastical lines and for many years was the only church building worthy of the name, between Moriches and Southampton.

A little more than fifty years later the congregation outgrew the little church "at the head of the bay" and it was sold to make way for a new one, larger and more adequate. The present church was erected on the same site and dedication services were held in 1888. At first, the exterior of the building was a gloomy, grey color, which was perhaps considered suitable at the time, but in 1947 a change to white improved the appearance and at the same time brought out some interesting features of the period architecture.



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The following year an exceptionally attractive and well equipped Parish House was added, and it affords ample space for the Sunday School and the social activities of the Church.

Even a short account of the local Presbyterian Church would not be complete without mention of the Rev. Thomas Coyle. Mr. Coyle was called to the Parish in 1904 and faithfully carried on the work for the next thirty-four years. When he retired in 1938, he had achieved a record in years of service unsurpassed by any former clergyman in the neighborhood.

Quiogue, which is just east of the Village limits, was designated as Little Asops Neck on the early maps of the western township. This section, being ideally located, was among the first to attract summer residents and the colony which developed was made up largely of clergymen and professors. As a result, some of the local wits, in a spirit of fun, often referred to Quiogue as "Priestville" and to Quantuck Bay as "Ministers Bay".

### *The Methodist Church*

The history of Methodism in the community does not date back as far as the Presbyterian, but it does hold second place among the early religious organizations.

The Rev. George Whitfield was the first Methodist preacher to blaze a trail on eastern Long Island. In 1764 the Rev. Whitfield delivered a series of sermons at various stops as he traveled through the Island enroute to Boston and, being an inspired speaker, his eloquent oratory left a mark which was to bear fruit in later years.

Soon after the Revolution, the circuit riders began to make regular visitations on the Island and, as a result of the

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Rev. Whitfield's endeavors, little difficulty was encountered in finding sufficient followers of the faith to make possible several Methodist Societies. A Society was formed in Westhampton toward the close of the eighteenth century and, although the visits of the circuit riding preachers at that time were probably infrequent, it was the nucleus from which the present Church grew. In 1828 the Suffolk circuit was established and, thereafter, the visits were more regular, although the territory to be covered extended from Bellport to Fire Place (Easthampton). At first, the meetings were held in either the home of a member or the school house, but in 1833 a church was erected on the main highway about a mile west of Beaver Dam. It was a modest little building, designed for service rather than beauty, and fortunately a brief description of its general appearance is still on record. Quote:

\*"The timbers for this first church were hewn from trees in the nearby woods, but the lumber came from west, near New York. The men went after it in a sloop. On the way back they encountered trouble near Fire Island and one man lost his life.

"The building was a small peaked roof affair, having two doors in front, one to be used by the men, the other by the women."

This little church underwent several changes and alterations during the seventy odd years it was in use but did not take on true churchly characteristics until 1890 when a tower and steeple were added.

In order to meet the needs of the growing congregation, a new and larger edifice was built in 1906 and the old church

\* Written by the late Benjamin Halsey in the "Book of Remembrance" West Methodist Church.

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became the Sunday school room of the new structure. Unfortunately, the second church was completely destroyed by fire thirteen years later.

The year 1919 marked an eventful period in the life of the West Methodist Church. After losing the building in January, the official board and other members of the congregation set to work with diligence and devotion to build a church on the same site, quite similar to the one which had burned. The work progressed so rapidly that the new and present "West Church" was dedicated in November of the same year.

For many years after the West Methodist Church was established, all the followers of Methodism in the vicinity gathered there for worship, but about sixty years ago the members who resided in the Village withdrew with the intent to found a church more conveniently located. At first, meetings were held in the Westhampton Chapel while plans were being formulated for the erection of a church on property donated by Mr. Mortimer Howell. The "Beach Methodist" Church, on Mill Road was completed and dedicated in 1891.

Over a period of forty years or more, many attempts have been made to reunite the two congregations but, until the present time, no satisfactory plan has been worked out.

### *The Roman Catholic Church*

Following the pattern of many other rural churches, the Roman Catholic Church in this community had a humble beginning in about 1880. Adherents to the Catholic form of religion were not numerous in the neighborhood in that era but, through the enthusiastic efforts of the late Margaret Foley, a few of the faithful were gathered together and an "out mission" of the Riverhead church was formed. The first Masses were



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said by the Rev. Patrick Creighton of Riverhead in Mrs. Foley's home\* which, at the time, stood beside Aspatuck Creek near the present Franklin Avenue. The journey from Riverhead over the sandy roads was a tedious trip, and it is quite probable that the mission, at first, was visited only once a month. However, a sufficient gain in membership was made after a few years and a church was built on property donated by Mrs. Foley. The modest little building was located near the site of the present rectory and after serving the first needs, was sold and moved to Quiogue Point where it was converted into a dwelling.

In time the Mission began to reflect the general increase in population of the nearby Village, so that in 1891 the membership had reached a sufficient number to permit the building of a new and larger church. In the same year the Mission attained the status of a Parish, and for a short time remained under the guidance of Father Creighton. After he retired, the new Parish was attended by visiting Priests who came from New York each week to hold Masses.

Services of the church were continued under this arrangement until 1911 when Father John Paterson was assigned to the work and, for the first time, the Parish was attended by a resident Priest. Father Paterson remained in charge for seven years, and during his service here the substantial rectory was built just south of the church.

The Rev. Joseph S. Slomski succeeded Father Paterson in 1918 and "Father Joe", as he is affectionately known in the neighborhood, has devoted thirty-four years of faithful service to the Church of the Immaculate Conception. His achievements are many but none greater than the present church, which was completed and consecrated in 1922. The old, frame church was

\* Later Mrs. Foley's cottage was moved to a new site on Franklin Avenue and is now owned by Donald Allen

moved to the rear of the property and has been remodeled for a parish hall.

### *Episcopal Church*

Most of the early settlers of eastern Suffolk County had been originally British citizens, and it may be assumed that many had been adherents to the Church of England. However, the church had not dealt kindly with the people and the resulting dissension was the basic reason for seeking religious, as well as civic, freedom in the New World. At the time Southampton Town was settled, the colonists from New England brought with them a puritanical type of religion, more or less on a Presbyterian basis, which by then was so firmly entrenched that any deviation from the form was frowned upon. Consequently, the few who may have preferred to follow the Book of Common Prayer in their worship were too greatly in the minority to support an Episcopal Church.

Among the larger population at the west end of the Island, attempts were made at an early date to bring the dissenting groups back into the fold. In 1702 Lord Cornbury, a domineering character, led the "Society for Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" in an endeavor to force the issue upon the people, regardless of their wishes. Stormy controversies continued for several years, but eventually the first Episcopal Church was permanently established in Suffolk County; and the famous old Caroline Church, erected in 1725 at Setauket, L. I., still remains, one of the most outstanding historic landmarks on the Island. More than a hundred years later, during the time when Sag Harbor was a bustling seaport, the first Episcopal Church in eastern Suffolk was founded there in 1846.

It cannot be said with certainty when or where the first Episcopal services were held in Westhampton Beach, but some

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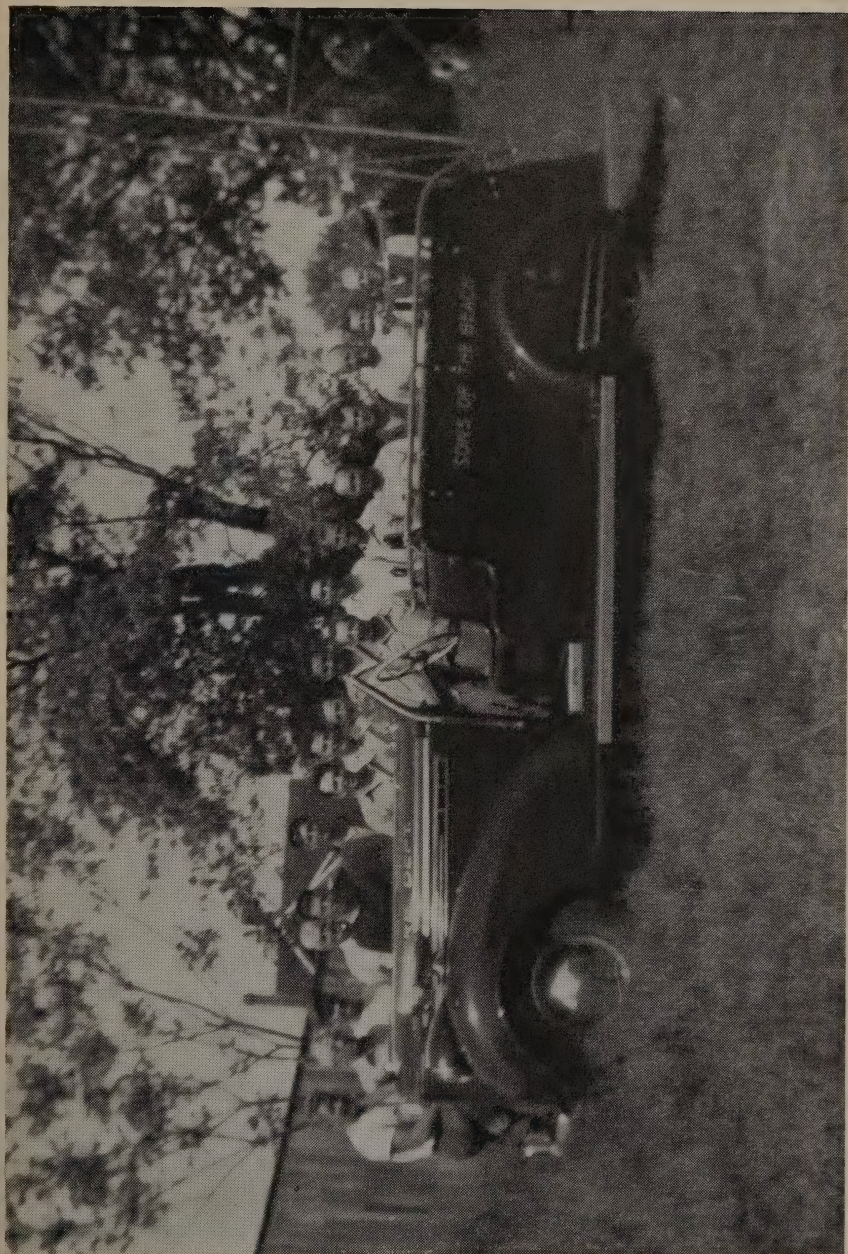
of the older residents vaguely recall a Rev. Cook (Pop), who came from Riverhead occasionally and read the service. For a few years in the early 1900s, Father Moran conducted a church school and read Evening Prayer under the arbors at Rogers Beach, and these informal devotions attracted a goodly congregation for several seasons.

Regular services of the Episcopal Church did not begin until the Chapel was completed in 1874, and during the summer for many years afterwards outstanding clergymen, vacationing in the vicinity, would volunteer to officiate. The resident Episcopalians, who had attended the summer church, were reluctant to drop their form of worship in the winter and, as a result, St. Mark's Mission was founded in 1924. The late Rev. Samuel Fish of St. John's, Southampton was in charge of the work and with the aid of an assistant, the first Episcopal congregation in the Village, under the jurisdiction of the Long Island Diocese, grew slowly but steadily. After years of fervent effort on the part of the Priests-in-charge and the members of the congregation, St. Mark's eventually became self-sustaining and in 1947 was admitted into the Diocese as a Parish.

St. Mark's Mission occupied the Chapel for the first twenty-five years of its existence and was successful to a point, but real progress did not commence until the Rev. Arnold M. Lewis was appointed in 1934 to take full charge of the work. Mr. Lewis was the first resident pastor and under his ministry the Mission began to develop rapidly. In 1939 a building lot was purchased on North Beach Lane, where in the same year a commodious rectory was built.

When in 1941 Mr. Lewis was called to service in the Armed Forces, he was succeeded by the Rev. Robert W. Woodroffe, D.D. By that time the growth of the congregation had

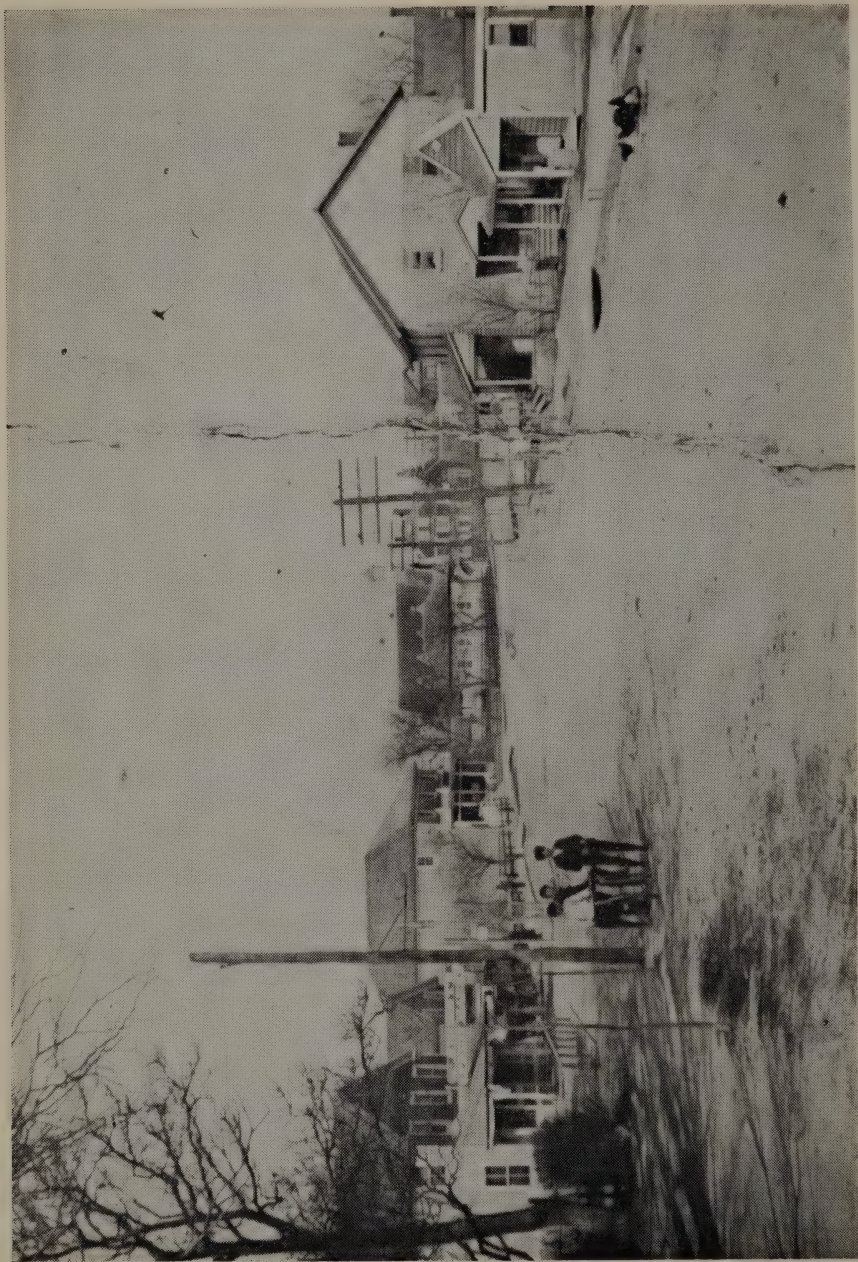




"SPEEDWAGON" WESTHAMPTON BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT

Photo by Arthur Brook 1951





MAIN STREET 1904

made the Chapel no longer adequate, and the necessity for a suitable church was one of Dr. Woodrooffe's first considerations. The problem of where and how to expand was solved when the late William C. Atwater, Jr., presented St. Mark's with the large property on the corner of Main Street and Potunk Lane, and at the same time contributed liberally to the building program. Within a comparatively short time construction was under way and in July, 1949 the handsome new St. Mark's Church was dedicated by Bishop James De Wolfe.

*The Westhampton Free Chapel, Inc.*

Over a period of more than seventy-five years, many facts relating to the origin and status of the Westhampton Free Chapel, Inc., have become confused and in some cases distorted. Now that the history of the Chapel is complete from start to finish, the details will be set forth in proper order.

Owing to the location of the Presbyterian Church and transportation difficulties in early times, it had been the custom to hold Sunday school in the public school house. However, this convenient arrangement was changed when it was ruled, in about 1870, that public school property could not be used for religious purposes. Perhaps the ruling was a stroke of good luck by making it evident that a meeting place for the Sunday school and other religious gatherings was needed in the growing Village. Much of the credit for the first church building in Westhampton Beach is due Mrs. Meeker (mother of Miss Augusta Meeker) and Mrs. Lydia Howell (Mrs. Mortimer D.), who took the initiative in a campaign to provide ways and means to build a chapel. On April 11th, 1872 the Westhampton Chapel Aid Society was organized and the members set to work with vim and vigor to raise funds by subscriptions and summer fairs. Two years later the goal was reached and the Chapel finally became a



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reality. It stood on a plot, which Mortimer D. Howell had donated, at the corner of Main Street and Mill Road. Mr. Howell gave the property with the provision that it should revert to the Howell family when and if it was no longer used by a religious organization.

In 1875 the Chapel was incorporated under the church laws of New York State with the official title of Westhampton Free Chapel, Inc., although it has often been referred to as the "Union Chapel".

Three protestant denominations, the Presbyterians, Methodists and Episcopalians, all contributed toward building the Chapel, and each one was privileged to hold meetings there and each was expected to share the responsibilities of upkeep, as well as the benefits.

The chapel remained on the original site for nearly fifty years and served the three churches adequately but, when the Seaside Bank found it necessary to expand and build a larger banking house, the Chapel corner seemed the logical and most desirable location. Inasmuch as some of the Bank officials were also trustees of the Chapel, no difficulty was encountered in negotiating the sale of the property, which the Bank purchased in 1924 for the sum of \$7,000. By the customary legal procedure the Howell heirs waived their right to the property as it was stipulated in the original deed.

The Chapel trustees arranged to purchase a small lot on Library Avenue from Ralph Cutter at a cost of \$1,500. Without delay, the building was moved to the new location and at the same time many improvements were made, which included a basement under the entire building with a furnace room and kitchen at the back and a large room for social gathering at the

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other end. It was, indeed, quite a step toward modernization when the small coal stove and the old oil lamps, formerly used, were replaced with central heating and electric lights. The new facilities added considerably to the usefulness of the building and for several years the Chapel continued to hold an important place in the religious and social life of the community. The Chapel Aid Society renewed its efforts and at weekly meetings, articles were made to be sold at the fair, that was held each summer to provide funds for repairs and permanent improvements.

The Methodist congregation had not used the Chapel to any extent after the "Beach Church" was completed, and when in about 1930 the Presbyterians decided to centralize all activities at the Church at Quioque, St. Mark's was left the only occupant of the Chapel. The Episcopal group then assumed the responsibility for the building and the congregation continued to worship there until the new church was finished in 1949. There being no further need for the Chapel Aid Society, a final meeting was called in 1936 and the group agreed to disband, and the remaining funds were divided among the three churches.

The turn of events finally left the Chapel without a tenant for the first time since it was founded, and for two years it stood vacant, gradually falling into a sad state of disrepair. Many suggestions were made for the possible continued use of the building, but none were sufficiently practical to take form. As the property began to deteriorate rapidly, the trustees were greatly concerned for the future; so when an offer was made to buy the building, it was given serious consideration. A series of meetings were called to discuss the matter and, after counsel with representatives from the churches concerned, it was decided to accept the offer. In December, 1950, the Chapel was moved

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to the Yacht Basin, loaded on scows and transported to a third location; this time on the beach where, after extensive alterations, it became an attractive summer home.

At a subsequent meeting in January, 1951, the trustees voted to deed the Chapel property to the Westhampton Free Library Association as a gift and to divide all other remaining assets among the three churches. At the same time, the corporation was terminated and thus ends the history of a fine, old building that fell victim to the march of time. It was not without a deep sense of regret that the trustees finally allowed the West Hampton Free Chapel, Inc., to pass out of existence.

### *Schools*

A brief item here and there in the first Southampton Town Records makes it evident that some sort of schooling was provided for the children from the time the colonists arrived, but all details concerning the early attempts in education are sadly lacking. One Richard Mills is referred to as schoolmaster in the first agreement drawn up by the "undertakers", but it appears that he was a busy man, dividing his time between training the soldiers for the home guard, acting as secretary at town meetings and purveying wines and liquors.\* Undoubtedly, the weighty problems involved in establishing a government occupied the attention of the Townsmen to such an extent that, for a time, the education of the younger generation was of minor importance. Although it is believed that regular schooling was provided at an early date, the Townsmen did not get around to giving the matter serious consideration until 1664, when it was voted to build a "School howse at the twnes charge".\*\* The privileges of education for many years were mostly confined to

\* Southampton Town Record Volume 1 Page 79

\*\* Southampton Town Record Volume II Page 232



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the young male population, while knowledge of the three R's was considered a wasted effort for the girls, inasmuch as they took little part in business affairs and were expected to devote their lives to home and family. A large percentage of the men were literate and could at least sign their names, but according to the records this was not true of the women, who had to resort to the traditional cross (X) to indicate their signatures.

There is little reason to believe that teaching in Catchaponack was neglected after permanent homes were established at about the turn of the eighteenth century. The first school records\* to be found are dated 1795-96 but are too brief to give more than a glimpse of the early educational system in the Village. Jared Gardiner undertook the duties of schoolmaster in 1795 and received a fee of 10 pounds for teaching forty-two pupils during a three month session from September to December. The following year the position was held by Theophilus Smith, and at the same time Abraham Howell and Timothy Halsey were named trustees. A list of pupils, giving the number of days they attended, shows that few took full advantage of the privilege.

The first school house in the Village of which there is a record and probably where these classes were held stood on Potunk Lane slightly north of main street. How long it was in use is not known but when it was replaced by a larger building, it was moved to the rear of the Jessup homestead and there served as a wood shed.

The second school in the Village is always referred to as the "Red school house", and it stood on the south side of Main street, about opposite the Patio building. No official data on this school has ever been found, but some local people still re-

\*Southampton Town Record Volume 5 Pages 137-138

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member the building and attending classes there. The late Mrs. Mary O'Come of Quiogue related to the historian her recollection of being a pupil in the "Red school" when she was a small child, and some facts she brought out are a striking contrast to the present school system. With the vast amount of property available at little cost in those days, it seems strange to learn that the school was built on the very edge of the road, so that the children stepped from the front door onto the highway. And still more strange is the fact that no toilet facilities were provided, making it necessary for the children to use those across the street on the property of Captain Franklin Jessup.

When progress necessitated a new and larger school, the "Red school" was moved to a place on the Stevens farm, where it remained until 1910, when it was moved again to the corner of South Country Road and School Street. At the new location the building was renovated and for many years has been the residence of Thomas Stevens, Sr. The Mill Road school was built about 1880 and it occupied a site on the north side of Mill Road, opposite and slightly east of the Jessup and Stevens garage. Many years later, when this school became inadequate, it was sold to Mortimer D. Howell, who moved it to the corner of Mill Road and Church Street and had it remodeled for a dwelling.

Over the long period prior to 1902, there is a great dearth of information relating to the growth and development of education in the Village, which perhaps is due to the fact that either records were not systematically kept or were destroyed by someone who did not realize the importance of handing them down for posterity. It is interesting to find that this is not true of the school at Westhampton (Beaver Dam). After the Town of Southampton was divided into school districts in 1814, minutes of the

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yearly meetings were faithfully kept by the trustees, although the ancient book of records makes it clear that a school was already in existence. According to the minutes of the annual meeting, 1815, a motion was carried to raise \$145.83 "by tax" to build a school house, and it is quite possible that this was the first school building at Westhampton. The motion did not state a new school so it may well be that the church had doubled as a school during the week, which was not an uncommon practice in early times. At any rate, the minutes further state that the trustees found the sum raised "insufficient" and were obliged to raise an additional \$61.02 for the project. The next reference to a school house is under the date of 1856, when the trustees voted at a special meeting to raise \$400.00 "to build a new school of brick if they can be bought for \$6.00 per M". Within a year the "Brick school" was completed and the 18' x 30' building was placed on the site just west of the cemetery, where the first Presbyterian Church had stood. Elementary education was carried on in this school for nearly fifty years, and there are still many people in the vicinity who were among the pupils during the later years it existed.

Another item of considerable interest comes from the old Beaver Dam minute book, and it concerns a library founded in 1839 with funds received from the school district. In the very same year Luther Cook was "chosen" librarian and had at his disposal the sum of \$6.72 for library expenses. For many years thereafter, one-fifth of the money allotted to the district by the Town was set aside for the support of the library.

The crowded conditions in both the Westhampton and the Mill Road schools at about the turn of the century brought the trustees face to face with the necessity of providing larger and more modern school facilities. The trustees of districts No.



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2 (Westhampton) and No. 17 (Westhampton Beach) jointly undertook a solution of the problem and, after careful consideration, were ready to present a plan designed to consolidate the two districts and provide one school building to serve both communities. In August, 1902 the plan was approved by the taxpayers and at the same time district No. 17 was absorbed by the newly formed Union Free School District No. 2.

More time and effort were required to accomplish this important change than can be realized from the simple statement above. The men who labored so diligently and with such foresight to bring about this advanced step in the educational program of the community deserve special recognition and a lasting place in local history. These leaders were: Winfield F. Jessup, D. Egbert Smith, Vernon Corwin, Alanson P. Rogers, Harmon D. Bishop and J. Mitchell Raynor. Quite logically this group of representative citizens were duly elected at an open meeting on August 26, 1902 and became the first Board of Education. At an organization meeting which followed in October of the same year, Winfield F. Jessup was chosen president and D. Egbert Smith, clerk of the Board, positions that both men continued to hold for many years afterward.

Immediately following the consolidation of the two districts, both schools continued in use for the time pending the completion of a new building. In order to cope with the crowded condition at the Mill Road school, a room on the second floor of the present Zaloom building was rented for classes.

Early in 1903 the Board of Education turned their attention to the serious problem of a site for the new school and a plan for the building. A. P. Rogers and W. F. Jessup were appointed a committee to purchase suitable property and after considering various parcels, decided to buy "2 acres of land or

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whole of triangle piece owned by Miss S. M. Jessup". This, of course, is the property occupied by the grade school. A few weeks later the Board voted to raise \$7,500. by a 4% bond issue, which at the moment seemed sufficient to cover the cost of the project. But history repeated itself, however, and when E. Raynor Sons submitted a bid of \$10,000. for constructing the building, the Board became aware that the cost would greatly exceed the figure first anticipated. The Raynor bid was accepted and, to meet the increased cost, an additional \$5,000. was raised by a second bond issue. Once the financial obstacles were met and disposed of, the work progressed rapidly and the frame building, pleasing in design, was formally dedicated on October 12th, 1903.

The public school system, particularly in rural areas, had remained more or less static for many decades but in the early part of this century school authorities began to plan with more vision for future development. In keeping with the trend of the times the local Board, in 1903, engaged I. J. Allen to assume the duties as principal and a few weeks later in the same year the school was placed under the jurisdiction of the New York State Board of Regents. The next step in educational progress came in 1907 when a high school was established, offering an opportunity for advanced study within easy reach of many students who had not had that privilege formerly. After completing elementary schooling, prior to that time, the young people who wished to continue their educations were obliged to go away to boarding school or to attend classes at the Patchogue High School. The latter was then the nearest and most accessible, although the journey back and forth required the students to take a train at about seven each morning and return on the evening train around six o'clock in the evening. Usually the trip to and from the railroad depot was made on foot, regardless

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of weather, making the effort of securing an education in those days quite a contrast to the luxury of the bus transportation that is furnished at present for pupils who come from a distance.

There is no better index to the growth and expansion of a community than that reflected by the increase in school enrollment. This is true of Westhampton Beach, and the general progress over a period of nearly fifty years shows that larger school facilities were required about every ten years for a while. In 1913 the school at Six Corners, which had seemed adequate for a long time when it was built in 1903, became overcrowded and at the yearly taxpayers meeting it was voted to add four more class rooms. The importance of fire-proofing in public buildings was by then generally accepted and for that reason the addition was built with brick. Again in 1922 another brick extension was added, the greater part of which was devoted to a gymnasium - auditorium.

Several years elapsed before it was necessary to undertake another building program, and in the meanwhile some changes took place in the personnel of the school system. In 1927 the Board of Education engaged Edgar J. Brong as principal to replace Homer T. Wilmot, who had held the position for eleven years previously. Mr. Brong was a young and energetic person and brought with him many ideas to improve the efficiency and raise the standards of the school. One of his recommendations resulted in a school band being organized and, although there was some opposition to the plan in the beginning, it has long since proved to be a valuable addition to the curriculum. Another suggestion made by Mr. Brong led to the founding of a Parent-Teacher Association which, for the past twenty-five years, has contributed many services beneficial to the school. The first project the group sponsored was the task of supplying some



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hot food in the winter to supplement the lunches carried by the children. With no kitchen equipment available at the time, the menu was confined to soup and cocoa. Arrangements were made to have the soup prepared outside and brought in large containers to the school, where it was served at lunch time by mothers who volunteered their services. Obviously this was not entirely satisfactory, but the venture proved so successful that a year or two later the Board of Education cooperated by allotting funds to purchase certain kitchen equipment. The kitchen was a rather makeshift affair at best but, after a few fixtures were installed, it was possible to cook a substantial lunch in the school at a minimum cost of five cents a serving. The lunch room continued under the direction of the P.-TA. until the high school was completed and the modern cafeteria and kitchen were put into service.

The year after Mr. Brong became principal, Carl Hansen was engaged to direct the physical education department. Mr. Hansen's ability as a coach and his enthusiasm for good sportsmanship soon produced notable results on the athletic field and basketball court. For nearly twenty-five years Coach Hansen has been an outstanding member of the faculty, and the influence of his high standards has contributed greatly toward making good citizens, as well as good athletes. Two other teachers who have achieved an outstanding record are Mrs. Charlotte Raynor Hulse and Mrs. Alice Young Greenwood, both of whom are descendants from the first colonial families. Mrs. Hulse and Mrs. Greenwood have been members of the faculty almost continuously for thirty-five years, and at present have in their classes sons and daughters of their first pupils.

Under the influence of circumstances brought about by a growing population, it became apparent in about 1930 that a larger school would be required if modern education standards

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were to be maintained. The Board of Education began at that time to formulate plans for the most ambitious building program ever undertaken. It was designed to include a new junior-senior high school and a prospectus for remodeling the existing school to accommodate the grades. The recommendations were made by the Board at the annual district school meetings for several consecutive years but for reasons based chiefly on what seemed to be the excessive cost, the proposition was always voted down. The question of a location for the high school was a serious obstacle in adopting the plan and delayed action for several years. Finally after years of controversy, the site on the corner of Mill and Depot Roads was agreed upon and it was voted to purchase the property (1937), and at the same time the plans for the building presented by the Board were accepted. Because of labor troubles and the storm in 1938, work progressed slowly but eventually the handsome high school was completed and dedication services were held on Sunday afternoon, December 10th, 1939.

While the high school was being constructed, the school at Six Corners underwent a thorough remodeling job. The old frame structure was replaced by a brick addition at the front in keeping with the south portion, which had been built several years previously. The interior was also renovated and the modern furnishings and equipment that were installed make it a practical, as well as an attractive, building for the lower grades.

During the years of procrastination and the period of construction, the enrollment continued to increase, making it necessary to rent extra space for classes at various places about the Village. The scattered class rooms were located in the Parlato garage showroom, on the first floor of the Grimshaw and Palmer building and in Mechanics Hall.

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The advances in the cost of building in the last decade bring out the fact that the wise planning and foresight of the Board of Education have placed the Village in the fortunate position of having adequate school facilities for the present and for several years to come.

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a few notes of interest concerning the local school and some brief references to the history of the school system and education.

It has been pointed out that the children of the early colonists were expected to have at least a short period of schooling during the year, although there was no law to enforce the rule until 1853. The Union Free School Act was passed by the Legislature in that year and was the first attempt by the State to make education compulsory. A clause from the law is quoted as follows:

“If any child between the ages of 5 and 14 having sufficient bodily health and mental capacity to attend public school, shall be found wandering in the streets or lanes of any city or incorporated village, idle, truant without lawful occupation such child and its parents are required to be brought before a magistrate for examination.”

There is every indication that this law was not vigorously enforced and was only observed when convenient for all concerned.

In 1874 New York State passed a new educational law to supersede the one adopted in 1853 and it was designated, “An act to secure to children the benefits of elementary education”.



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It is a point of intrest to note that New York State and Massachusetts were the only two states in the Union which had enacted public school laws prior to the Civil War.

The State Board of Regents was created in 1786.

At the time districts Nos. 2 and 17 were consolidated, there were 140 children of school age registered.

Report cards were issued for the first time in Westhampton Beach in 1902.

The rural school at Tanner's Neck (Westhampton) was closed in 1947 and the children are now transported by bus to the grade school in the Village.

The trustees of the Beaver Dam school presented a budget for the year 1889 of \$450.86.

The budget for the schools in the Village in the year 1950 was \$178,681.50.

High school students from Quogue and East Quogue have attended the Westhampton Beach school since about 1918. Each village supplies bus transportation.

It can be stated on good authority that students in the present day high schools receive a more complete and better rounded education than was possible at Yale or Harvard two centuries ago.

### *The Westhampton Free Library*

An interesting thread of romance is woven in the early history of the Westhampton Free Library, and the story can best be told by quoting a paragraph taken from notes on the Library that Hampton P. Howell, Jr., was able to secure in 1947 from the founder, Mrs. Warden.

## CHURCHES - SCHOOLS - LIBRARY - CEMETERY

"Christine Halsey was the daughter of Ed Halsey, who ran the old hotel known as "The Oneck House" in the Oneck section of Westhampton Beach, at the corner (NE) of Oneck Lane and Oneck Road. This building was pulled down in about 1925. In the summer of 1891 she met a Scotchman, William Warden, whom she married in 1892, who suggested that she start the Library. She therefore got various people to donate books, small amounts of money, and other forms of assistance. These included Dr. Henry Van Dyke, Aaron P. Whitehead, Morgan Dix and Mortimer D. Howell."

The inspiration gained by Miss Halsey from the gentleman of her choice led her to act upon his suggestion with the result that the people of the Village have had the pleasure and privilege of a public library for the past sixty years. Interest and enthusiasm in the project were shared by many local residents and Mrs. Meeker, who always stood ready to promote cultural advancement, gave the first dollar toward the support of the library.

With a modest collection of books the duties of librarian were shared by Miss Halsey, Mrs. Nellie Jessup Anderson and later by Mrs. D. E. Smith and Mrs. Halsey Clark. At first the infant library occupied space in the Fanning Griffing store, but in a short time was moved to a small building which stood between the Main Street Apartments and Smith's grocery store.

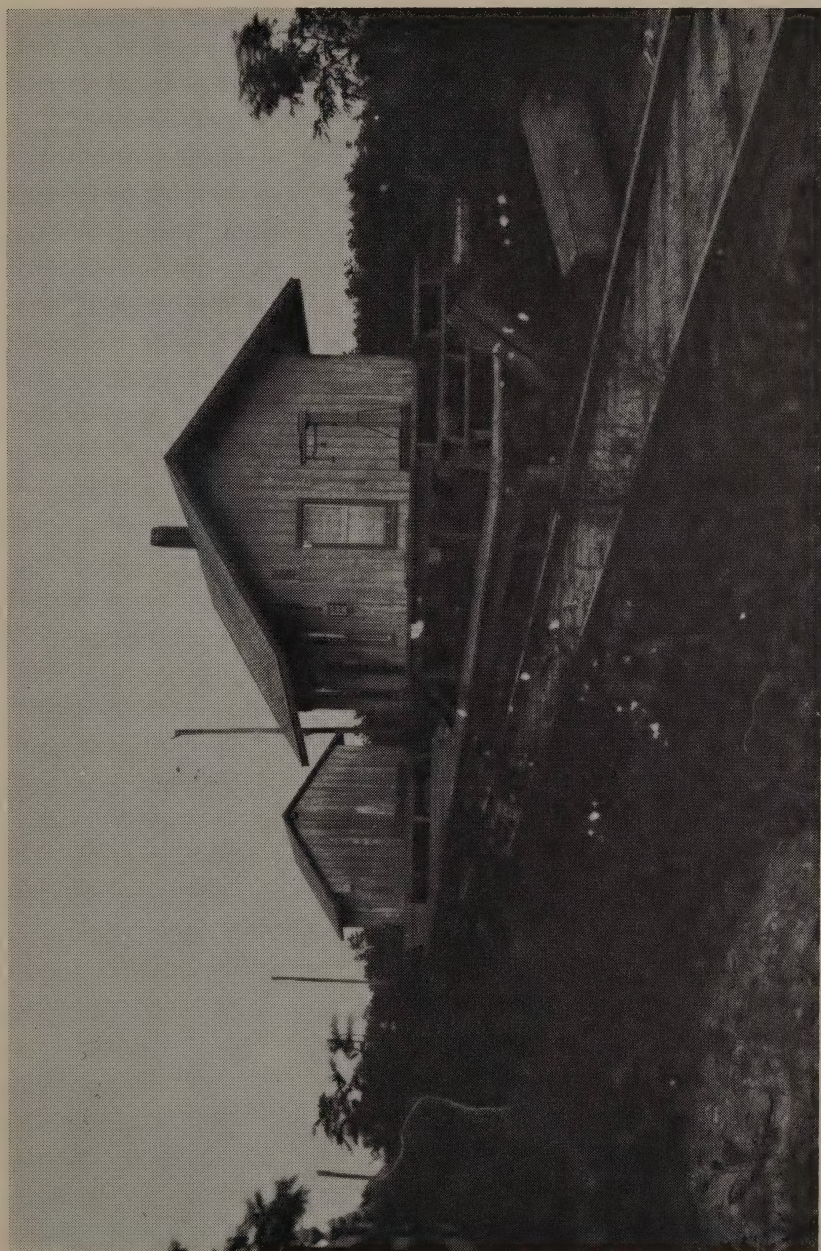
After ten successful years the library was firmly established and in 1902 was chartered under the Library Division of the University of the State of New York, and at the same time acquired the title of "The Westhampton Free Library Associa-

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

tion". Directly after the charter was obtained, Miss Augusta Meeker was appointed to take full charge and was the first salaried Librarian. Three years later the Woman's Village Improvement Society, the civic minded group of residents which has been mentioned in the preceding pages, undertook the task of providing a suitable building to house the increasing number of volumes. The Society contributed \$1,000. to the project and Ralph Cutter donated a building site on the street which later was named Library Avenue. Additional funds to meet the cost of building were obtained through subscriptions volunteered by the local and summer residents. Without great difficulty \$3,600. was raised and this sum was sufficient to complete the Library building in 1905 without a deficit.

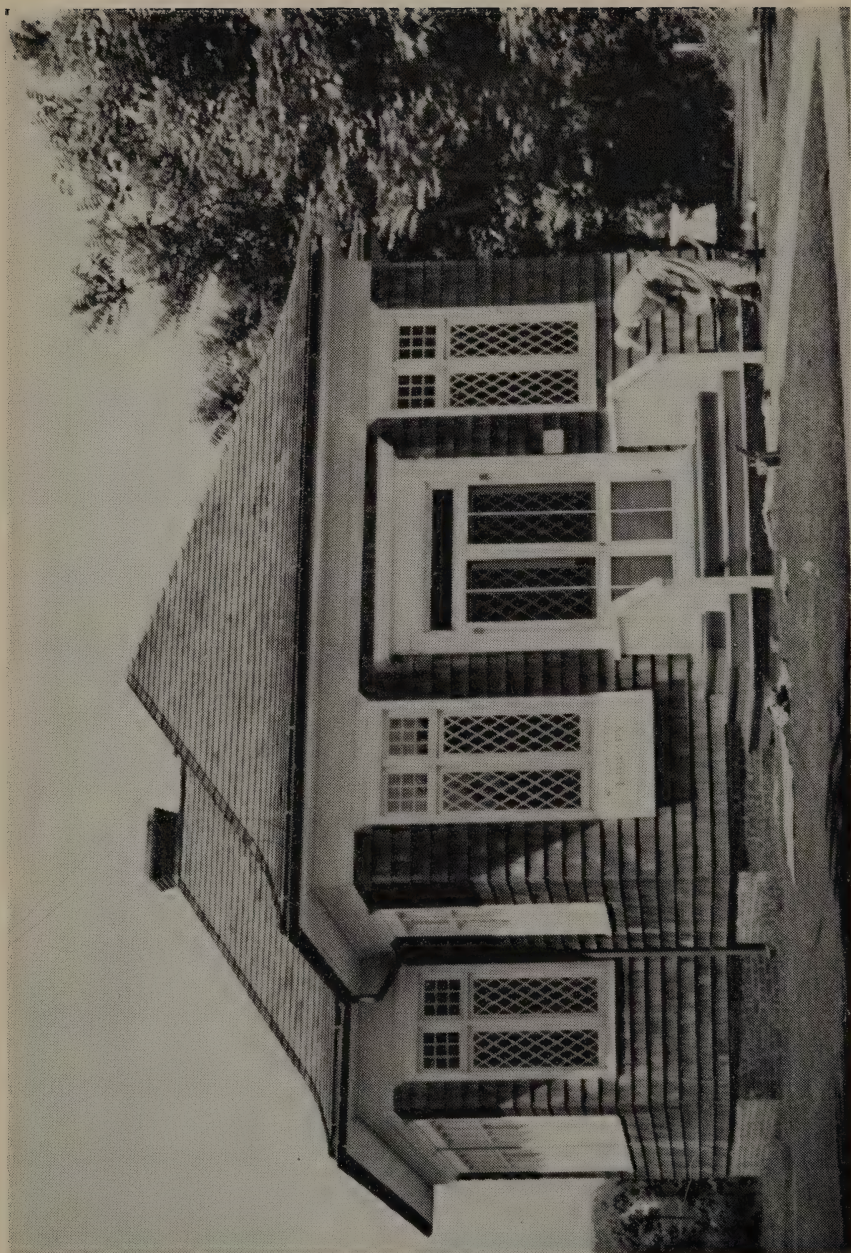
During the years that followed, the library received support by a small allotment from the government and by contributions from the local people. For some time Miss Meeker personally attended to the annual collection of funds, but this method of support proved unsatisfactory and inadequate as the expense of maintaining the library continued to increase. Dues of one dollar a year for membership in the association together with fines charged for overdue books constituted another but small source of revenue. Eventually the time arrived when it was no longer possible to operate the library efficiently on such an uncertain income; so in 1928 it was considered advisable to request the Board of Education to include \$1,500. in the school budget, which was ample then to cover current running expenses. The request was granted and with subsequent increases in the allotment, many of the problems with which the Trustees were formerly faced have been eliminated. The library is used constantly by the students of the public schools and the aid given them by the Librarians is of great value to the educational program.





RAILROAD STATION





WESTHAMPTON FREE LIBRARY

Photo 1947

## CHURCHES - SCHOOLS - LIBRARY - CEMETERY

When Miss Meeker resigned in 1937 after completing thirty-five years of faithful and efficient service, she was succeeded by Miss Sophia Parsons who had previously been the assistant Librarian. It would be impossible nowadays to carry on the work without the aid of an assistant and for some time Mrs. Charlotte Groves Winters has ably acted in that capacity.

The residents of the Village and especially the Trustees and friends of the library are fortunate in being able to look forward to a time in the near future when the building will be enlarged and completely renovated. This is made possible by the interest and generosity of Judge Harold R. Medina, who in 1947 established the "Harold R. Medina Fund for the Benefit of the Westhampton Free Library". In creating the substantial fund, it is Judge Medina's desire to widen the cultural opportunities for the people of the neighborhood and to promote the highest type of citizenship.

The Judge appointed a special board of trustees to administer the Fund and the original list of appointees included: Basil O'Connor, Roy D. Duckworth, Joseph T. Stevens, Herbert Culver and Emerson Raynor.

Plans are being prepared and all signs point to a modern and well-equipped library of which the community will be justly proud and ever grateful.

### *Westhampton Cemetery*

Perhaps the most interesting bit of antiquity still remaining in the neighborhood of the Village is the Westhampton Cemetery\*, which for more than two hundred years has been the final resting place of the early families, as well as succeeding generations. The historic records do not reveal when this prop-

\* A record of monuments in the Westhampton Cemetery completed in 1908 is on file in the Historical Department of the Village



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

erty was set apart for a burying ground, but it is a well established fact that it adjoined the site of the first Presbyterian Church at Beaver Dam. It would be of particular interest to know when the first burials took place, but during the course of the centuries many of the stone monuments have been broken beyond repair while others, which have withstood the wind and weather, have worn away until the inscriptions are no longer legible. The cemetery suffered severely in 1938 when many old stones were smashed to fragments by uprooted trees, leaving heaps of rubble which could not be reclaimed. As a result, the oldest monument at present marks the grave of Elisha Howell, who died in 1754 at the age of seventeen years. Several other markers bear dates in the late 1700s, but it is reasonable to assume that burials were made earlier, probably before it was customary to use stone grave markers.

The gradual increase in the local population has made it necessary in recent years to enlarge the cemetery and plan for future expansion. To meet the inevitable, the rolling woodland directly north of the original site was purchased and the nicely landscaped plots in the new section, overlooking the pond, are rapidly adding to the beauty of the quiet country burying ground.

The Cemetery Committee calls a yearly meeting but, unfortunately, the attendance is never good; however, a few faithful officers attend to the necessary business and provide for the maintenance of the grounds.

A small burying ground with a number of graves is to be found at the back of the Presbyterian Church in Quogue and was obviously started when the church moved to that location. Perhaps because of the limited space, it has not been used for some time.

CHURCHES - SCHOOLS - LIBRARY - CEMETERY

A little-known burying ground in the vicinity has been in existence for about two hundred years and is situated in West-hampton, slightly south of the main highway. It is the private cemetery belonging to the Jagger family and interments are still made there from time to time.

## VI

*Wars - War Agencies      Topography - Climate*

*Ship Wrecks                      Coast Guard*

*Wild Life - Fish*

### *Conclusion*

The material gathered in this final chapter of the first history of Westhampton Beach is quite unrelated except as each topic has a special influence upon the community as a whole. The history of war, scientific information on climate, geology, topography and animal life are contained in volumes written by competent authors; therefore, only a few notes of local interest will be included here.

The War of the Revolution and the War of 1812 have already been mentioned in an earlier chapter, but little is found in the records to tell what part the inhabitants of Catchaponack took in either struggle. The serious activity on the Island in the War of 1812 was centered around Sag Harbor, and throughout the disturbance a detachment of New York State Militia kept the situation well in hand. However, from this last encounter with the British, Westhampton can claim at least one hero and the story is best told by quoting from the records:\*

“An armed vessel, the ‘Governor Tompkins’, after a fight with the British Cruiser, off the south side of Long Island, tried to make New London, to refit, a port held by the Americans. Headed off

\* Southampton Town Records Volume 8 Part II



and pursued by enemy ships the 'Tompkins', by sailing through Plum Gut made an escape to Sag Harbor. The gut was narrow and rocky then, and the British ships dared not follow, Daniel Winters, \* of Westhampton was pilot of the 'Tompkins'."

The operations of the Civil War, like the two preceding ones, were far removed from the quiet Village and only altered the lives of the families whose men folks left home to join the fighting forces. The quota allotted to Southampton Town was always met, even though it was necessary to resort to the accepted custom of paying \$100. bounty per man at first and increasing the amount to \$750. by the close of the war in 1864. The Federal Draft Act of 1863 allowed a draftee to hire a substitute by paying \$300. and many, who did not care to face the rigors of war, took advantage of the law. At the time no assured allowance was made for dependents and, aside from the small bounty money, the families of fighting men were obliged to fend for themselves, which may account for the popularity of the Federal Draft law.

There were approximately three hundred seventy-five soldiers and sailors on the Civil War roster of Southampton Town, but it cannot be learned how many of that number represented Catchaponack. At any rate, the names of ten local men who gave their lives to preserve the Union are perpetuated on a weather worn memorial shaft in the cemetery. The casualties were: James E. Griffing, Franklin B. Hallock, Reeves H. Havens, John H. Jessup, Henry Raynor, Timothy Robinson, Thomas M. Smith, Edward Stephens, Cyrus D. Tuthill and Hiram A. Wines.

\*Daniel Winters died in 1827 and is buried in the Westhampton Cemetery

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

The painful years of rehabilitation following the Civil War had receded well into the past when in February, 1898 the treacherous bombing of the battleship "Maine" in Havana Harbor fanned into flame a war that had been smoldering for years between this country and Spain. Once the conflict had started, Spain soon realized the hopelessness of continuing the struggle and in December of the same year signed a treaty of peace.

The battles fought in Cuba and the naval engagements in the Pacific were all too remote to cause the people of eastern Long Island serious concern, and this may be the reason that local historians have touched lightly on the whole affair. After the war had been successfully won, the servicemen recovering from fatigue and tropical fever were taken to the old hotel at Montauk for a period of recuperation. The trains carrying the soldiers to and from the Point created considerable interest among the people in the towns along the way and gave them the only first-hand contact with the recent war. At each stop of the troop train, a large group of civilians gathered at the depots, prepared to greet the veterans with all sorts of refreshments to cheer them on their way. If a young woman was given a "soldier button" in return for her kindness, she was considered lucky to own such a prized possession.

Three men from Westhampton Beach are known to have taken part in the Spanish-American War and, while there may have been others, it is quite doubtful if any gave their lives during the hostilities. On the honor roll are the names of Eckford G. Rogers, J. Louis Autier and Frank F. Beale (Station master).

England and her allies on the continent of Europe had been at war with Germany for nearly three years before the American people were drawn into the conflict on April 6th, 1917.

## WARS - SHIPWRECKS - COAST GUARD - WILD LIFE

Attacks on American shipping and a total disregard of neutral rights suddenly plunged this country into a war which it was not prepared to fight.

The tremendous quantities of raw materials required by the Government to carry on the struggle caused some shortages in the food supply and everyday needs of the civilian population. Wheat flour and sugar were scarce, but the use of gasoline was not restricted except for the voluntary observance of a "gasless Sunday" occasionally. Flour was perhaps the greatest privation that the home people had to endure, and substitutes offered, such as: corn, rice and potato flours, were difficult to use with any success at home, and the commercially baked goods were equally unpalatable. Sugar was in short supply because of the small quantities imported and, when it could be obtained, often brought *thirty cents* a pound. It is quite possible that this ridiculous price could well have been the result of gross profiteering somewhere along the line.

Westhampton and Westhampton Beach assumed a fair share of their patriotic duty and, besides a substantial purchase of "Liberty Bonds", about seventy-five men and women answered the call to active service in what was believed then to be a "War to end Wars".

The casualty list may seem small in proportion to the number serving, but the loss of four gallant young men who gave their lives on the battlefields is nonetheless regrettable. The honored names are: Arthur Ellis Hamm, Walter Kloppenburg, Van Rensselaer Skidmore and Edward J. Ericsson.

Soon after the Armistice was signed in November, 1918, the country generally entered a period of prosperity, which lasted for nearly ten years. This "flush" era came to a sudden end in



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

1929, when a combination of circumstances brought about a financial collapse and business depression world-wide in scope. Building and construction operations were reduced to a near standstill with the result that unemployment became widespread and a serious problem. The situation in Westhampton Beach was similar to the conditions in other parts of the country and, as building and summer business fell off, many local people found themselves in desperate straits. Without an opportunity to provide for their everyday needs, self-respecting families were frequently obliged to call upon welfare agencies for assistance, consequently suffering humiliation as well as privation.

Little progress had been gained toward a financial recovery and the "prosperity just around the corner" had not made the turn when the cataclysm at Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941 plunged this country into a war more widespread and horrible than any in previous history. After the insidious attack on the Navy, America not only undertook a fight to the finish with Japan but also joined forces with Great Britain and the other countries allied in an effort to put an end to German aggression. Although there had been indications for months that war was inevitable, the United States was as unprepared as it had been at the beginning of the war nearly twenty-five years earlier, with the result that the sudden demands for vast quantities of materials of all kinds created shortages in supplies for home consumption.

In an attempt to make a fair and equal distribution of commodities to the people, a system of rationing was devised whereby each citizen was issued books of stamps that were required for purchasing meat, butter, cooking fats, canned goods and shoes. The system worked out fairly well, but as is usual in an emergency there is a certain class of people

everywhere who stand ready to take advantage of the situation by hoarding and black marketing.

Some of the action of the Second World War came closer to the lives of the people in Westhampton Beach than had been the case in any of the wars in previous years. Even though the actual operations were well removed from this continent, there were three vital reasons why the seriousness of the conflict was constantly in the minds of everyone. First, and most important, 349 men and women from the community were serving in some branch of the Armed Forces. Secondly, the large aviation field that had been constructed on the Riverhead Road was the base where fighter pilots of the Air Force received their final training before going overseas. The continuous whirl of the aeroplanes overhead was an ever-present reminder of the hostilities going on in the world. And thirdly, the Village took on an aspect of a real military camp when in 1944 several companies of the Anti-Aircraft Division were stationed in the vicinity. One tent encampment was located on Mill Road at the corner of the Riverhead Road and there was a similar one just north of the cemetery. Besides the troops just mentioned, the radar and Coast Guard installations on the beach brought the number of military personnel in the vicinity of the Village up to several thousand, although the exact figure was never disclosed.

All during the War street lights were dimmed and residents were required to keep the shades in their home closely drawn down at night. Practice air raids were held frequently and a total blackout was required while such operations were in progress.

The long list of men and women, either drafted or enlisted, who served in the Second World War, will not seem out of proportion to the size of the permanent population when it is

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

remembered that many names represent families in the summer colony.

On the Gold Star Honor Roll of Westhampton and Westhampton Beach, the following noble young men gave their lives to preserve the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

Henry Andrechu  
Alexander P. Cytra  
Rodney L. Dayton  
Stanley Dunn  
Stephen Dyhouse  
Ralph Fountain  
Joseph W. Geer, Jr.  
Bruce M. Kavan  
Howard Kirman  
Russell Rose  
Howard Sommers

The circumstances attending the last two World Wars presented a need for special services and, as is always the case in an emergency, the local people readily accepted their share of responsibility.

At the time England was undergoing a merciless bombing by Germany in 1940-41, a chapter of the British War Relief was established in the Village. A workroom was secured on the second floor of the Patio Building, where the women of the community produced, in a few months, a remarkable number of knitted articles for the British Armed Forces and also packed many boxes of used clothing that were sent overseas to alleviate the sufferings of the unfortunate civilian population. Besides the activities of the workroom, successful benefit entertain-



## WARS - SHIPWRECKS - COAST GUARD - WILD LIFE

ments were given to raise funds for the expenses involved in carrying on the work. It is estimated that the chapter contributed around \$2,000. in money and materials during the two-year period. However, when this country entered the War, the interest immediately turned to problems at home and the British War Relief was discontinued in 1942.

The Westhampton branch of the Hampton Chapter of the American Red Cross has been in existence since 1914 but in peace times it remains more or less inactive. The necessities of war always change the picture and during the last two major conflicts the local branch was extremely active. In both instances, workrooms were maintained where the members produced a tremendous amount of hospital dressings and other essentials for the war effort.

The scope of the second World War called for drastic measures in providing protection for the local areas, and these responsibilities were assumed by a branch of the Civilian Defense. Regular meetings were held and in a short time a well organized first aid and ambulance corps was ready for action if an emergency arose. Equally important to home defense was the Canteen group, which was trained by the Red Cross to prepare and serve food in quantities in time of need. The services of the Canteen were also required to assist when the mobile unit of the Red Cross Blood Bank came to the Village for periodical contributions.

The possibilities of an attack by air in war years were so great that a branch of the Civilian Ground Observers Corps of the Army Air Force was necessary to keep a constant watch for alien aircrafts. The observation post was located on the tower at the high school and the duty was shared by volunteer men and women on a twenty-four hour basis. Any aeroplane which came

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

into view was reported by telephone to the Filter Centre in New York, where an elaborate system of charts enabled the workers to check all flights of the U. S. planes. The danger of attack by air had lessened considerably by 1944 and the observation post was discontinued in the autumn of that year.

The local people were confronted at the beginning of the last war with a problem that had a lighter side but still was of paramount importance. The question of how to give the numerous members of the Coast Guard stationed in the vicinity a place to spend their liberty under wholesome conditions required serious thought and planning. A few women appointed themselves a committee to do something about the situation and for a time the need was taken care of by the Firemen, who offered to lend their meeting room for a service club. Although the room was rather small, it answered the purpose well enough until large numbers of Air Force men began to appear in town, and then it was obvious that larger quarters must be found. Mr. Basil O'Connor helped solve the problem by giving the use of his house on Potunk Lane, just north of the County Club, for a servicemen's center. At about the same time it was decided to affiliate with the U.S.O.\* in order to take advantage of the assistance it was prepared to give in the more ambitious program. Mrs. Lola Jessup took over the duties of resident supervisor and with the aid of volunteer workers a successful club was maintained until the end of the war. The rooms were well filled each evening and the men enjoyed the various kinds of entertainment, but best of all they enjoyed gathering around the kitchen table to partake of the refreshments furnished by the hostesses.

\* United Service Organizations

*Topography - Climate*

The general topography of eastern Long Island has not changed greatly since the last series of ice coverings finally vanished about 2500 years ago. The only changes of importance have taken place along the coasts, especially on the ocean front where it is estimated that the shore line has receded a hundred feet or more since the first white settlers arrived. Evidences of this fact were seen in 1931 after the huge waves ripped through the beach, cutting a wide inlet opposite East Moriches. The force of the receding mass of water carried away all the sand on a portion of the beach near the inlet, leaving meadow bog and stumps with parts of trees two or three feet high exposed. It was indeed a strange sight to see on the surf shore, but history tells of a similar case of erosion on the beach, which uncovered an old road with wagon wheel tracks still visible in the meadow bog. For ages unknown to man the beaches have undergone changes due to wind and water but, in spite of all the forces of nature, there is little permanent change in the general contour of the sand barrier, and the encroachment of the sea is so slow that the idea of the ocean eventually advancing to the mainland is highly improbable.

The 1931 storm, which caused the Moriches Inlet, was unlike usual storms in that the high seas were not accompanied by strong winds. The slight property damage was more than compensated for by the improvement in the condition of the water of the bays, due to the direct circulation from the ocean.

The prevailing temperate climate of eastern Suffolk County is occasionally punctuated by a severe storm and through the years some have been so violent or so freakish, that references to unusual weather conditions are found in the records from the time the Town was settled.



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

A storm of hurricane force struck the Island in 1815 and so great was its fury that even today it is still called the "Great September Gale". There is nothing to tell now how Catchaponack fared during this storm, but undoubtedly the scattered settlement was not seriously damaged. However, along the New England coast the more densely populated areas suffered considerable loss of life and property.

The 1815 gale had long been a matter of tradition when on September 21st, 1938 the Island was hit by a violent hurricane, which is still fresh in the minds of the people who endured the harrowing experience. Frequent references to this storm and the destruction that followed have been made in the foregoing pages; therefore, no further details will be given. A scientific account of the catastrophe called, "The Hurricane of 1938 on Eastern Long Island"\* was written by Ernest S. Clowes of Bridgehampton, and it is recommended for accurate information on the subject.

Another exceptionally bad storm of near-hurricane proportions struck the Island in September, 1944. This time, the wind and water took a heavy toll in uprooted trees and unprotected small crafts at the west end of the Island but did not cause any damage of importance in the immediate vicinity.

Although the rules upon which weather is predicted sometimes vary, the period between August 15th and October 15th is the season when hurricanes may be expected. The "northeaster" that occurred on November 25, 1951 may not be classed as a true tropical storm, but before it "blew itself out" more damage had been done on the local beach than at any time since 1938. The rough sea and strong winds hit hard at a point about a mile

\* Mr. Clowes was official weather observer for eastern L. I. for ten years. His book is available at the local Library

west of the Jessup's Lane Bridge, cutting a small inlet through the beach. Two houses were lost, others damaged, while long sections of the Dune Road were washed out or covered with sand. Repair work began very soon afterwards and by the following spring, few traces of the havoc could be seen.

The records kept by official weather observers over a period of many years have proved the climate of eastern Long Island to be one of the most exceptional on earth. Besides being temperate, there is each year a normal rainfall and the number of sunny days throughout the year exceeds the number at any other place east of the Rocky Mountains. Sunshine can be counted upon 55% of the time in the summer and an average of 5% less in winter. Also, according to the U. S. Government statistics, the eastern seaboard of the Island has one hundred more clear days a year than New York City! The dry, cool summers with an unusually high percentage of sunshine have contributed materially in making this section an ideal vacation resort.

In spite of the many unique and favorable characteristics of the local climate, it must be pointed out that no weather is perfect or can be depended upon to follow a special pattern year after year. Consequently, extremes in cold, hot and dry weather do happen occasionally. The least amount of rain falls in the summer and during the season a drought lasting from a month to six weeks is quite usual. One of the longest known "dry spells" was recorded in 1762 when no rain fell from May until November. Another extreme in climatic conditions happened in 1816 and in history is referred to as "the year without a summer". By some strange combination of circumstances, freezing temperatures occurred in every month throughout the summer as well as the winter. In more recent times severe winters have been

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

recorded in 1885 and 1917, when temperatures dropped to sub-zero, causing the ocean to freeze solid for several feet from shore.

Heavy snows are not frequent along the coast of eastern Long Island, but occasionally Mother Nature produces a storm so severe that it holds a lasting place in local annals. The most recent storm of the kind started on December 26th, 1947 and for more than twenty-four hours snow fell, reaching a depth of three or four feet on the level, with drifts much higher. All railroad transportation was halted for several days and travel on the highways was slow and dangerous. During the remainder of the winter, lighter snows fell that kept the ground covered from December until the latter part of February. This last big snow takes a place in history beside the Christmas storm of 1811 and the famous blizzard in 1888.

Winters for the past three years have been mild with only occasional "cold snaps" and little snow, while summer temperatures during the same period have been slightly above normal. This cycle of temperate weather often leads to the conclusion that conditions are changing and in a matter of time the local climate will be tropical or nearly so. Such an idea is far from the truth and, after observations year in and year out, it is found that the climate of eastern Long Island remains essentially the same.

### *Ship Wrecks*

The winter storms and high winds in past years were responsible for frequent ship wrecks along the coast, and many thrilling stories of such disasters are a part of the Island's folklore. Before the modern aids to navigation were developed, the skipper and his crew were obliged to depend upon their sea-



faring knowledge, a compass and their own good judgment to sail a vessel safely into port but more than often this was not enough. Every winter at least one ship met with tragedy along this coast and there is not a village located on the ocean front which has not had, at some time, a shipwreck nearby. Seldom, if ever, was a ship floated again once it hit the beach, and heavy seas usually dealt a final blow of destruction before the crew could be rescued. In later years, after the advent of the steam engine, it was possible for wrecking companies to save many stranded vessels before serious damage had been done.

The tragic loss of life and property close at hand was not as depressing to the seashore dwellers as might be expected. The traditional "ill wind" frequently blew ashore a bountiful supply of goods as ships broke up and valuable cargos were dumped into the sea. Following a disaster, the villagers were constantly on the lookout for whatever might wash up, and salvaging sometimes provided luxuries otherwise out of reach. Happy was the "beachcomber" who happened to stumble upon a bolt of calico or woolen cloth, a crate of shoes, tropical fruit or a cask of fine old wine. The contents of the ship's cargo were not the only prize; spars and timber from the ship itself were hauled to the mainland, to be used in building.

In 1878 the Norwegian bark, "Frederick" was lost off Westhampton and in 1904 the schooner, "Augustus Hunt," met a similar fate, and from the latter only two of a crew of ten were saved. The last ship to meet difficulties on the local beach was a small freighter, which ran aground about a mile west of the Jes-sup Lane Bridge in December, 1930. The moderately high seas at the time were not sufficient to warrant any trouble and the poor navigation can only be attributed to carelessness. Two Coast Guard cutters and several tugs from the Merritt, Chap-

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

man Wrecking Company stood by and with the aid of the Coast Guard men the ship was pulled off about ten days afterwards without serious damage.

### *Coast Guard*

The frequency of disasters along the coast eventually led to a demand by shipping interests for some form of shore patrol sponsored by the Federal Government. As a result of this demand, the first appropriation for life saving was made by Congress in 1847. Prior to that time, a group known as the "Life Saving Benevolent Association" volunteered the only aid and shelter available to shipwrecked sailors. The first paid coast patrol was not altogether effective, but the value of the service had been proved to the extent that in 1871 a readjustment was made and the Life Saving Service was established within the Revenue Marine Service under the Treasury Department. To carry on the new service, substantially built "Government Houses" were placed along the ocean front of Long Island at five mile intervals. Each station was manned by a Captain and a crew of seven men, who patrolled the surf shore for two and a half miles in each direction at night and in foggy weather. At this point a patrolman would be met by a member of the crew from the adjacent Government House and in a small shelter called the "halfway house," tokens were exchanged to be carried back to the respective bases as evidence that the tour of duty had been completed. The personnel who made up the crews were usually descendants from good old pioneer stock and from years of close association, knew the sea in all its moods. Furthermore, years of experience, coupled with courage and sound judgment, were the attributes that made the old-time surf men famous for their ability to meet and handle serious situations along the coast.

## WARS - SHIPWRECKS - COAST GUARD - WILD LIFE

In 1915 the Revenue Cutter Service, originally the Revenue Marine Service, and the Life Saving Service were combined and the latter then became the Coast Guard. Following this change, the character of the crews began to change also and the competent men were gradually replaced by young fellows, whose ability was far below the former standards. The Life Saving Service and Coast Guard throughout the country have saved many lives each year and in both World Wars, as an arm of the Navy, have rendered valuable service at home and abroad. During the last war especially, the Coast Guard attracted a high type of men who raised and have maintained the early standards.

After the first World War, aeroplanes and jeeps began taking over the work that had formerly been done by men, who walked many miles along the surf, often in freezing winter storms. The efficiency of the new system made it possible to patrol the coast from widely spaced bases; consequently, the majority of the old Coast Guard Stations were closed. In the early 1930s the Potunk Station, which stood about a half mile west of the Jessup Lane Bridge, was discontinued and after the storm in 1938 no trace of the old landmark remained. The Station opposite East Moriches continued in service until it too was swept away during the hurricane. At present, in this area, the coast and bays are protected from two bases on the mainland, one at East Moriches and the other at Ponquogue (Hampton Bays).

### *Wild Life*

The wooded hills, plains, salt marshes, streams and shores washed by the sea that made up the terrain of eastern Long Island offer a haven for an abundance and variety of wild life, but not in the quantity and variety that the first white settlers found here. Although Nature's bountiful supply of game and



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

fish provided a source of much needed food for the pioneers, there were also beasts that gave the early farmers considerable trouble. The control and extermination of wolves, the earliest records disclose, were matters of serious concern to the colonists before the General Court finally took action in 1652 and appointed a townsman to make it his business to hunt and kill wolves. Perhaps the bounty of thirty shillings for each one destroyed reflects the seriousness of the situation when that handsome reward is compared with one shilling sixpence paid a man in the same period for a day's labor. Bears also roamed the countryside years ago, but there is nothing to indicate that their number was large enough to be a real menace. Tradition has it that the wife of an early Howell settler shot a bear from the kitchen door of her home in Catchaponack. Deer were abundant years ago and the threat of extinction later on was avoided by conservation laws that have now increased the number to the point where the lovely little animals are a nuisance to farmers and home gardeners in some sections of the Island. In addition to foxes, raccoons, skunks, opossums and rabbits that still live in the woods and swamps, the early colonists also found seals, beavers, heath hens and wild turkeys, but through vigorous hunting and increased population the latter have long been extinct in these parts.

Fish, shellfish and crustaceans have always been plentiful in the local waters, although the rapid growth of population in recent years has reduced the natural supply considerably. Evidence of the former abundance of shellfish may still be seen at a number of places along the shores where Indians years ago had "kitchen middens" and have left in the ashes of their fires, shell deposits often 18 to 24 inches thick. Shell heaps of this kind represent many years of habitation and a fine example of one still exists on Pine Neck, East Quogue.

Ever since records have been kept, there are many and frequent references to whaling and the rise of an occupation to an important industry has contributed a highlight to the history of eastern Long Island. John Jessup of Catchaponack was the leader in a company of off-shore whalers in 1678 and aside from such operations, Catchaponack has relied for its part in the enterprise upon the men who shipped on whaling vessels out of Sag Harbor. In the years between 1837 and 1850 whaling was at its height, and the success of the industry induced men from all parts of the Island "to go down to the sea in ships". The list of Catchaponack citizens who "signed on" for whaling voyages include: John Culver, Franklin and Isaac Jessup, Rogers Bishop, Silas and James Winters, Sina Stevens, Jonas Griffing, Daniel Corwin.

Some years after the whaling industry had become a matter of past history, another species of large fish was pursued off the local beach—the sturgeon. Beginning in about 1890 and running through until 1918, fishermen in the Village and Westhampton developed a profitable business by setting their nets for these valuable fish. Eventually the cost and upkeep of the huge nets became prohibitive and the fishermen in this area gave up sturgeon fishing, but nets are still set off the beach whenever there is a seasonal run of fish. Nowadays one seldom hears of a sturgeon being taken from the nearby waters. The local fishermen who engaged in sturgeon fishing were: Frank Rogers, Silas and Peter Tuttle, C. W. Nichols, the Ocame brothers, John and Arthur Raynor, Fletcher Raynor and Walter Lomas, Sr. The children of the latter still recall the unpleasant task of straining the roe, which commercially is the most valuable part of these large fish. Generally it has always been believed that the best caviar comes from Russia and, while this may be true, investiga-

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WESTHAMPTON BEACH

tion has brought out the fact that the hundreds of pounds shipped from Westhampton frequently became "imported" before reaching the retail trade. In the early years of this century, sturgeon fishing off the coast here was at its peak and the fishermen, who took part in the industry, realized anywhere from forty cents to a dollar five cents a pound for the roe but only eight cents a pound for the sturgeon meat. Along with whaling, this occupation has taken a place in history but during the intervening years considerable change has taken place in the price of the famous delicacy. Caviar, from wherever it may come nowadays, sells to the retail consumer for \$35. per pound!

### *Conclusion*

In the preceding pages the growth and development of the Village has been followed from the latter part of the seventeenth century to the middle of the twentieth. Changes came slowly at first but it is quite evident that the railroad, and later the automobile, were responsible for a new era in history. In spite of wars, financial reverses and hurricanes, progress has continued until the quiet little hamlet of old is gradually becoming a sophisticated suburban town.

It is interesting to reflect upon the reactions of an old settler, were he to leave his celestial home for a few hours and visit the Village he once knew so well. If he stepped into the living room of almost any home, he would be amazed to see the program coming in over the television and would surely believe that witchcraft is still practiced. A look at a modern kitchen would be another startling experience, and it is doubtful if he could believe his ears when told that the beef steak about to be popped into the broiler of an electric range had cost \$1.40 a pound. Returning to the living room, he would be further mystified to hear the



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roar of jet planes overhead, travelling at 700 miles per hour, and to observe a daily newspaper laying about with big, black headlines screaming out the threat of communism and war. After observing all the accoutrements of modern living he, no doubt, would be happy that he had lived before life became so complex—before the Atomic Age.



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